ANGLO-CATHOLIC CONGRESS
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# The Catholic Movement in the Church of England

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# The Catholic Movement in the Church of England

By

WILFRED L. KNOX, M.A.

PRIEST OF THE ORATORY OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD, FORMERLY SCHOLAR OF TRINITY COLLEGE, OXFORD

LONDON

PHILIP ALLAN & CO.

QUALITY COURT, CHANCERY LANE

*First Edition.....November,* 1923.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY THE THREE TOWNS PRINTING CO.,
28 RUSSELL STREET, PLYMOUTH.

# PREFACE

I HAVE endeavoured in this book to put forward a general account of the position of those who are commonly called " Anglo-Catholics." The word itself I have avoided: already there are signs that it is in danger of acquiring a misleading significance, as though " Anglo-Catholicism " ought in some way to aim at establishing a new variety of the Catholic religion, or could be content with securing certain changes in the general standard of teaching and external presentment of the Christian faith within the Church of England, while retaining the insularity of outlook which has since the sixteenth century been the curse of English religion. Consequently I have replaced the word by the term " English Catholics " : the mere fact that it is somewhat awkward and inconvenient is of a certain value, since it serves as a continual reminder that the present state of affairs, in which those who hold the specifically Catholic conception of the Christian revelation are outwardly divided, is contrary to the will of God and calls urgently for remedy.

My object has been to describe the main features of the Catholic system of religion as it has developed from the teaching of Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles, to trace the course of events by which the continuity of that system was just preserved in the English Church at the Reformation, and to describe the almost miraculous manner in which it was revived in the last century and the course which that revival has followed down to the present day. In conclusion I have endeavoured to estimate the

attitude which the followers of the revival are tending to adopt towards certain of the problems of the present time, notably towards the urgent problem of Christian re-union.

The Christian religion is an eternal revelation of God to man, and is therefore necessarily in one sense incapable of change. None the less in another sense it is continually changing; for it is continually adapting itself to new methods of human thought and new ways of looking upon life. Consequently it is in this sense a continual process of evolution, in which the element of permanent truth is continually being adapted to the needs of new generations. The present time is one in which the challenge of new methods of thought is being urged with the utmost vigour by one side, and resisted with equal vigour by those who find nothing wanting in the older traditions of Christian teaching. In certain points I have endeavoured to indicate the lines along which the reconciliation of the two claims may be looked for: but at the same time I am well aware that a final synthesis is not to be looked for in the immediate future. Those of my critics who do not condemn me as a "Modernist" will condemn me as an "obscurantist"; probably both will be perfectly correct.

Unhappily in an age of controversy it is necessary to take for granted the greater part of those fields of Christian belief on which there is general agreement, and to spend an excessive amount of energy on ploughing the arid fields of polemical argument: this must be my defence for the lengthy treatment devoted to the question of authority in the Church. Here again I shall incur the displeasure of those who see nothing amiss in the traditional arguments of popular Anglo-Roman or Catholic and Protestant controversy. My apology for venturing on a new line of approach must be the proved

futility of a system of controversy which is foredoomed from the beginning to a perpetual deadlock.

In regard to the more recent developments of the Catholic movement in the English Church I have endeavoured rather to analyse the tendencies actually at work than to dictate a line of policy which the movement ought to follow. Those familiar with the course of the revival will be aware of the many attempts that have been made to limit its progress to some particular doctrinal and devotional point, beyond which it cannot go without being disloyal to the traditions of the Church of England. Those limits have each in their turn been submerged by the advancing tide of Catholic devotion, and are now only remembered as curiosities of the past. It is possible that I shall be accused of a lack of loyalty to the distinctive position of the Church of England. But if in being loyal to the teaching of the Church Catholic I am disloyal to the Church of England, I fear that I shall bear the reproach with equanimity.

In one respect I am conscious that this book is seriously deficient. Any attempt to trace the growth of the Catholic revival in the English Church ought to deal also with the parallel revival within the Roman communion in this country, a revival that has been so closely and curiously interwoven with the Anglican movement. I have not attempted to do so. The historical survey of the two revivals in M. Thureau-Dangin's *La Renaissance Catholique en Angleterre* succeeds in surveying the whole course of the two revivals with an impartiality which is hardly to be achieved by any English writer who is inevitably engaged as an active partisan on one side or the other. I have therefore ignored the Roman revival, since any estimate of it that ventured beyond the limits of uncritical admiration would almost certainly be resented as an impertinence.

In conclusion I would ask that if in anything I have written I have offended the feelings of my readers, the fault may be considered as due to inadvertence of expression, not to uncharitable intention. I have endeavoured to write in that spirit of charity which alone can lead to the reconciliation of the divisions of Christendom and bring into the way of truth those who are now in the darkness of unbelief and error. I would ask in advance for pardon in respect of the many failures of which I have no doubt been guilty.

Since the beginning of the Oxford Movement in 1833 its opponents have prophesied its speedy failure. Several times that failure has seemed imminent: yet it has never come to pass. "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

W. L. K.

St. Saviour's Presbytery, Hoxton

*Octave of SS. Peter and Paul*, 1923.

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# Part I

# The Catholic Conception of Christianity

# I

## THE MEANING OF CATHOLICISM

The word Catholic means " universal." In this sense it has been used since the second century A. D. to mean the whole body of Christian people as against particular individuals or groups who have sought to modify the teaching received by the whole body, either by the introduction of new doctrines or by the omission of certain doctrines already held by the whole. It implies the belief that there has been from the first preaching of Christianity one recognisable standard of belief, which is identical throughout the world, and that any deviation from it is an abandonment of the universal faith of the Christian community. This standard of belief may be developed by the bringing into explicit recognition of teachings which were already implied in the original deposit of faith, but not by the addition of anything new ; it may be modified by the omission of opinions widely held, but proved in course of time to be erroneous, but not by the abandonment of anything that has been formally and finally accepted as part of the Christian faith. It is important to bear in mind that the word " catholic " does not denote universality in the sense of comprehensiveness, in other words that the Catholic Church does not include the whole body of those who in any sense call themselves Christians, and that the Catholic faith does not mean that irreducible *minimum* of common beliefs, if any such can be found, which is common to all Christian people. It is of course tenable that the Catholic Church ought to be made wide enough to include all such

people as are in general sympathy with the ideals of Christianity, and its doctrines reduced to a general statement of such ideals. But such a " catholicism," however desirable it might be, would in fact be something entirely different from Catholicism in the sense in which it has in fact been understood in Christian theology. The reasons for which those who hold the Catholic faith in its historic sense are unable to accept the view that the essentials of Christianity ought to be reduced to that *minimum* which could find universal acceptance among men of good will, or among all those who in some sense call themselves Christians will be made clear in the course of this book.

## II

## FOUNDATIONS

The Catholic faith begins with the belief that God, Who had for thousands of years prepared the world by partial revelations of Himself, vouchsafed in many times and places, but pre-eminently to the Jewish nation, made a final and complete revelation of Himself in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. This revelation differed not merely in degree, but in kind from all that had gone before it. For Jesus of Nazareth was not merely a human being, endowed to a greater extent than any other of the sons of men with insight into the nature of God ; His birth was not as the birth of other men ; He was by a miracle born of a pure Virgin, Mary. None the less He was also perfect man, capable of being tempted and of suffering as we are. After a human life of perfect sinlessness, lived

in the obscure Roman province of Judaea from about the year 5 B. C. to about the year 29 A. D., He was crucified. His death was due to the jealousy of the authorities of the Jewish nation, the accredited trustees of the fullest revelation of God hitherto granted to the world; their jealousy was excited by His claim to revise, on His own personal authority, the beliefs and practices of the Jewish religion, abolishing its external forms, where these had become a hindrance rather than a help to the human soul in its attempt to approach to God; refusing to accept the tendency, then becoming dominant in the nation, to hold that the exact observance of such external forms was a necessary means of attaining to personal holiness; and denying that the mere observance of such forms was in itself any part of personal holiness at all. In substituting for the old and incomplete conceptions of Judaism a new conception of the nature of God and His relations to man, He claimed to be acting in virtue of His own personal right, due to His unique relation to the one true God of Israel, Whom He claimed as His Father. The result of His teaching was the union of all the religious authorities of the Jewish nation, who were also, in virtue of the peculiar history of the people, its secular authorities as well, in a conspiracy to destroy Him; their united demand forced the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, whose consent was necessary for the infliction of the death-penalty, to agree to His crucifixion.

His ignominious death was not, however, as it seemed at the moment, the death blow to His teaching. He was crucified on a Friday; and on the Sunday morning He appeared to His broken and despondent followers, for He had risen from the dead. He had foretold to them both His death and His resurrection; but it would seem that up to the last they had refused to credit even the possibility of His death, and were taken by surprise

when it came; they were equally astounded at His resurrection. Their refusal to contemplate the possibility of His death was due to His claim to be the Messiah or Saviour of the nation, whose coming had been foretold by the prophets. The Messiah was expected to establish a kingdom in which He would reign as the king of the Chosen People and establish their supremacy over the whole world. Up to the last the followers of Jesus had expected the establishment of such a kingdom, and failed to grasp the death and resurrection which He foretold. His appearances to His disciples after the latter event extended over a period of forty days, at the end of which He definitely left them. His activities on earth were over. His followers, however, especially the twelve disciples who had been particularly closely associated with Him during the comparatively short period of public life which preceded His crucifixion, were no longer the little band of dispirited men who had stood by Him up to the moment of His arrest. They had now gained complete confidence in their Master. For ten days after His departure they waited at Jerusalem; at the end of that time on the Jewish festival of Pentecost, the fiftieth day after the Passover, they came forward, filled with a new enthusiasm, ascribed to the direct outpouring of the divine Spirit which had inspired the prophets, and announced their claim that Jesus had risen, and that He had entrusted His followers with authority to proclaim that through belief in Him mankind could obtain forgiveness for their sins, and enter into a new order of life. That new life consisted in the power of attaining to holiness in this world and entering into eternal glory after death. The last-named point was indeed at the moment regarded as being of comparatively minor importance; for it was supposed that Jesus would shortly return in glory to judge the whole of mankind both living and dead

and give to all their due reward of everlasting happiness or everlasting misery. In any case however the vital element in their message was that the death of Jesus constituted an act of atonement for the sins of the world. In virtue of it all could obtain pardon for the sins of the past, (for Jesus had taught that by His death He was to bear the punishment that those sins deserved), and also the power to escape from the dominion of sin during the remainder of the time that might intervene between the acceptance of the new teaching and His second Coming, or the death of the believer. In order to enter into this new life it was necessary for the convert to be cleansed from his sins in the sacramental ordinance of baptism; this ceremonial washing was the means by which the sins of the past were done away. The other distinctive ordinance of the new community or sect of Judaism, into which the followers of Jesus formed themselves, was the Eucharist, a ceremonial meal instituted by Jesus on the night before His crucifixion, in which the faithful, under the outward forms of bread and wine entered into a mysterious communion with the Master; for in eating the Bread and Wine of the Eucharist they were made partakers of His Body and Blood.

For a few years the new community continued to be a sect of Judaism; but before long, under the influence of Saul of Tarsus, originally a Jew of the most scrupulous orthodoxy, and a persecutor of the Christians, it broke away from, or was cut off by, the followers of the old religion. Saul was converted by a vision of the risen Jesus, and became the most ardent Apostle of the new revelation. It was his insistence on the necessity of preaching it not only to the Jewish nation, but also to the Gentiles, and his clear perception of the logical necessity of abandoning, so far as the latter were concerned, the observance of the old system of the Law, that led to the

breach between the new movement and the traditional system of Judaism. In spite however of the fact that in respect of education and general personal ability he was by far the greatest figure in the new movement, the leadership of it remained with the obscure fisherman of Galilee, Peter, who had been one of the original disciples of Jesus, and had by Him been given a general, though not clearly defined, position of leadership among His followers.

From its outset the new movement was violently unpopular. In the eyes of orthodox Jews, not only in Palestine, but throughout the whole Roman Empire and beyond its borders, the Christian Jew was an apostate from the national faith. It must be remembered that then as now there was a Jewish colony in every important town of the Graeco-Roman world. It must also be remem, bered that Judaism was then a vigorous and progressive religion, making converts wherever it went. It rightly saw in Christianity, with its offer of the same advantages that Judaism had to give and its abolition of the necessity of complying with the somewhat grotesque and repulsive requirements of the Mosaic Law, a rival which must be destroyed, if Judaism was to continue to exist as a serious religious force outside the limits of the Jewish nation.

At the same time Christianity was bitterly persecuted by the heathen. To them it seemed only a new form of the old Jewish "superstition." Judaism had indeed in spite of great unpopularity obtained a general toleration in the Roman Empire; for in spite of its considerable successes its proselytising had been on too small a scale to attract the general attention of the heathen world. It was not so with Christianity. The new teaching abolished the observance of the Law, which had hampered the propagation of Judaism: but it retained and emphasized the refusal of Judaism to admit of any compromise with religions of the Gentile world; the Christian must

renounce all connection with the religious life of his neighbours. It was this absolute exclusiveness which separated Christianity from the numerous Oriental cults which were its contemporaries and rivals. The same feature provoked in the incredulous and easy-going world of the first century A. D. the most embittered hostility; the profession of Christianity by itself was a capital offence. None the less the new religion grew and prospered, until within three hundred years from the death of Jesus of Nazareth on the cross outside Jerusalem it had become the recognised religion of the Roman Empire. In the struggle between the world and the Galilean the Galilean had conquered.

## III

## THE PERSONALITY OF CHRIST

The teaching of Jesus of Nazareth had not primarily concerned itself with the laying-down of any system of dogmatic belief. He had summoned men to repent and enter a new kingdom of God which He had come to establish on earth. This kingdom was not indeed to be fully realised in the present order of the world, but only after His second coming in glory to judge all mankind. Until that time however it was possible for men to enter into it in that preliminary or provisional form in which it was to be set up at once. The first condition of entering into it was repentance; and this must be followed by a life of complete surrender of all worldly interests, and, if necessary, of all worldly possessions. The motive for such a surrender was personal faith in His own claim to

be the Messiah, and His power to reward His faithful servants. This faith involved a constant struggle to attain to personal holiness, the conception of holiness being that which He laid down by His teaching and by His personal example. To those who followed Him He promised forgiveness of sins, a forgiveness which He claimed to give in virtue of His own personal authority. In His sweeping revisions of the conception of holiness current among the Jews of His own time He claimed a similar authority, based only on His peculiar personal relation to God, a relation described as Sonship, but without any theological definition of the meaning of the term. To those who disputed His authority He replied by pointing to the miracles which He worked. This teaching was partly given to the general public which flocked to hear Him, partly to a small inner circle of chosen companions. To this circle He promised after His Resurrection a special gift of the Spirit of God, which would enable them to carry on His work of calling men to repentance and holiness. To those who repented they could grant forgiveness of sins in His name. It has been seen above that this power to obtain forgiveness was based on the fact that His death was a ransom for the sins of the world.

It must always be borne in mind that these claims were made by Jesus of Nazareth before a nation which claimed to possess the only true revelation of God to man in the form of the Jewish Scriptures, and that Jesus Himself fully admitted that claim. The divine origin of the Law and the prophets He fully admitted; His authority however was such that He had the right to interpret and to fulfil them by introducing a new dispensation by which the old was superseded. The theology of the Catholic Church as to His personality rests not on any particular verbal utterance of Jesus, but on the impos-

sibility of explaining in any other way the facts of His life and the history of the Church. That theology holds that He is both God and man. His humanity was indeed doubted by certain very early sects of heretics, who, believing in His Godhead, could not understand how it was possible for God to die upon the Cross. It is not a matter which the present generation is likely to dispute. Clearly His death could not be an atonement for the sins of mankind, unless He Himself shared the nature of those who had sinned ; nor could His example of perfection be of any value, unless He were open to the same temptations which beset the children of men.

In any case it is rather His Godhead which the modern world accepts less readily. The difficulty of believing that the Creator of all things intervened in person in the history of one particular planet to reverse the order of human history is obviously stupendous. Yet Catholic theology states that it actually occurred, and that no smaller assumption will account for the facts. The belief was not reached in a moment. In general the writers of the New Testament, which record the teaching of Jesus and His immediate followers, represent Him as a being of a supernatural order, higher than even the created Spirits, or angels, whom Jewish tradition believed to be the ministers of God. The belief in the existence of such an order of spirits was confirmed by Jesus Himself, and has passed into the traditional theology of the Church ; but it was never supposed that Jesus was a created being of this class. In general the writers of the New Testament are content to describe Him in language borrowed from the conceptions of that mixture of Jewish and Greek thought which was current at the time both in Palestine and among the Jews of the Dispersion, i.e., the Jews resident in the cities of the civilised world outside the territory of Judaea. In the terminology of this world of thought He is described

either as the Incarnation of the divine Word, the Reason or thought of God, by which He made the world, (for this Reason was regarded as an emanation from God possessed almost of an independent personal existence), or as the divine pattern or prototype of humanity conceived by God at the creation, (for the original divine pattern of man must have been perfect, and actual men being sinful could only be regarded as an inferior class of beings, resulting from the union of a copy of the divine origina with the material creation). The inadequacy of these conceptions is manifest, but they were employed, the former by the author of the Fourth Gospel, the latter by St. Paul, as a means of expressing the belief that Jesus was a being of a distinct order, existing independently of the world, and the divine agent employed for its creation and redemption rather than a created being. Such a belief harmonised with the Jewish conception that the Messiah was not merely a human being called by God to save the nation, (for this had been the oldest Jewish conception), but a pre-existent representative of humanity, who was to be revealed by God at His appointed time.

These conceptions might develop in one of two ways. Either they might lead to the belief that Jesus had been the revelation on earth of a subordinate being in a divine hierarchy, divine in His nature, yet inferior to the supreme Godhead, or they might lead to a belief in His personal identity with God.

It was the latter course that after long and embittered controversies was followed by Catholic theology. Into the history of those controversies we cannot enter. It is sufficient to point out that it was the only possible explanation of the belief that Jesus was of a higher order than any created being, whether human or angelic. In the ages when Christianity was first preached there was a general

willingness to accept religions which offered salvation from the difficulties and miseries of the material world by the personal union of the individual believer with a redeemer of an intermediate order between God and man ; and numerous attempts were made to explain the personality of Jesus in this way. None the less they were rejected by the instinct of Christianity. They could be made to harmonize with a great deal of the language used about Him by His first followers, for those followers had often borrowed terms to express His nature from the circle of religious ideas which were occupied in proclaiming the salvation of man through the agency of such intermediate redeemers. Yet it was rightly felt by the Church that such conceptions of the personality of Jesus would be fatal to the Christian faith. For they would immediately have reduced Him to the position of being one among many redeemers. It was characteristic of the age to suppose that all the various cults which offered salvation in this way were in their varying degrees approximations to the truth, and none of them exclusively the truth ; it was from the outset the central doctrine of Christianity, as it had been of Judaism, that it alone was true and all other religions false. But this claim could only hold good if Jesus were Himself the full and final revelation of God to man ; and this belief could only be maintained if in fact He was personally identical with God. Any lower claim would have reduced Him to the position of being one among many more or less divine redeemers. By contenting itself with such a claim and tolerating its rivals the Church could have escaped from persecution ; but it would have disappeared, as its competitors disappeared, by a process of gradual amalgamation with one another which robbed them of their character as religious cults and reduced them all to a rather nebulous mysticism. It was the claim that Jesus was God, which guaranteed to the Church

the permanence of its system of salvation, its external forms of worship, (for these in their essence were derived from Jesus Himself), and of its standard of moral perfection. It is of importance to bear in mind that this insistence on the divinity of Jesus in the fullest possible sense was entirely contrary to the natural tendencies of the time and the immediate interests of the Church, although it seems to us necessary and inevitable. For it is plain that modern thought could never tolerate the conception that Jesus was, so to speak, a semi-divine being. It is possible to accept Him as God, or to regard Him simply as a man of peculiarly lofty spiritual insight, but not as a supernatural being intermediate between God and man. Hence it is natural for us to suppose that the Church took the simple and obvious course: in point of fact its course was entirely contrary to the general tendencies of the age.

## IV

## THE HOLY GHOST AND THE HOLY TRINITY

Jewish thought had, before the life of Jesus, been familiar with the conception of a divine spirit pervading the universe. This spirit was the power by which God maintained the world in being. It was also the power by which He had inspired the Saints of the old covenant to declare the ways of God to men and to remain faithful in the midst of an idolatrous and evil world; it was further the divine Wisdom which enabled the individual Jew to understand the ways of God aright and to obey His will in the affairs

of life. In its origin this conception was another form of the conception of the Word of God as a power intermediate between God and man. The exact scope of the teaching of Jesus on the subject of the Spirit is uncertain, since it is mainly contained in the last of the four Gospels, a work which cannot simply be assumed to be a record of His actual words. It is however clear that He accepted this Jewish belief, and taught His disciples to believe in the existence of a divine Spirit manifesting itself in the writers of the Jewish Scriptures, in His own life and the lives of others. In particular He promised His disciples that after His departure from them He would send them a special gift of this Spirit to direct them in the ordering of the affairs of His kingdom and in answering the attacks of their persecutors. By a process analogous to that described in the last chapter the Christian Church came to see the personal action of a divine being in the supernatural power which enabled a handful of ill-educated and obscure men to preach the Gospel throughout the world to the accompaniment of miraculous cures of sickness and diabolical possession, and to hand on to their successors the power to continue their work until the end of time. The existence of such a personal divine Spirit was implied in the teaching of Jesus and verified by the experience of Christians. His nature could only be explained by the doctrine that He was a personal being, and that He too was in some sense divine; and since the Church had rejected the temptation to recognise any intermediate divinities, He too was regarded as God, and as forming a separate personality within the one Godhead.

Thus the Catholic Church came to the belief that the one God is triune in His nature. Within the unity are the three distinct personalities—the Father, proclaimed by Jesus as the supreme source of all being, the Son,

manifested in time in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and the Holy Ghost manifesting Himself in the preservation of the world and pre-eminently in the life of the Church. This is the doctrine described as that of the Holy Trinity, which is the basis of the Catholic religion. " Now the Catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity."

Clearly it would be impossible here to enter into anything approaching a full investigation of the meaning of this dogma, or a defence of its credibility.. It is however essential to insist on the following points.

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is not a belief in three Gods. The three Persons are One God. Although the doctrine involves a mystery which passes beyond human comprehension, along certain lines we may make some progress in the direction of understanding it. Thus, for example, the fact which differentiates the contents of the conscious life of individual human beings is their imperfection. The sum of my knowledge differs from the sum of the knowledge of any one else, precisely because both my knowledge and his are imperfect. In matters in respect of which both of us know the full truth, (in fact of course there is no matter on which the full truth is known to any single human being), the contents of our knowledge are identical. Since, however, all truth is eternally present to God, the contents of the knowledge of the three persons of the Holy Trinity is eternally the same. Similarly the contents of my life as a being possessed of free will differ from those of the life of any other human being, partly because my will is morally imperfect, partly because my power to realise my will is imperfect, partly because my knowledge of the right choice of my will is imperfect. Since none of these imperfections can be regarded as applying to God, it follows that the will of the three Persons is eternally the same.

The unity of God must not be interpreted as meaning that the three persons are not so much three persons as three distinct forms in which the operations of God manifest themselves. This explanation is perhaps the most attractive and reasonable of the ancient heresies; it is called "Sabellianism" after its author, Sabellius. They are three persons. Once again it is only possible to suggest a line along which we approach a truth which passes understanding. The teaching of Jesus insisted that the essential element in the divine nature is love. Love demands an object to be loved, and perfect love can only be found where the object of love is worthy of a perfect love. It is inconceivable that the full love of God could manifest itself towards any being of a lower order than Himself, for such love would be bestowed on an object of an infinitely inferior character. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity suggests how it is possible for the love of God to find an object that can satisfy itself in pointing to the mutual love of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. It may be noted that all religions which insist simply on the unity of God necessarily conceive of Him as a being dwelling alone in infinite majesty and unapproachable holiness—a being Whom it is only possible to fear—for it would be an unthinkable presumption for His creatures to offer Him their love. The heresy of Sabellius, as it is the most reasonable of the ancient heresies from the modern point of view, is also the most dangerous, since it either excludes the element of love from the divine nature, by isolating God from any worthy object of His love, or degrades it by implying that the love of God can find a satisfactory object in man.

Although the dogma of the Holy Trinity ultimately surpasses human reason, it is not contrary to it. The human reason is the highest of all created things, and it is impossible to suppose that man can be compelled to believe

something which is entirely contrary to his own nature. At the same time there is nothing unreasonable in the view that the nature of God should in the last resort surpass the grasp even of the human reason. In the preceding sections the attempt has been made to show that the actual development of Catholic theology as to the personality of Our Lord and the doctrine of the Holy Trinity was the only development compatible with a belief in the unity of God, the exclusive truth of the revelation of Jesus of Nazareth, and the acceptance of the essential element in His teaching, that God is love : and that this interpretation followed necessarily from the historical facts of the earthly life of Jesus. Hitherto however we have assumed that the account of that revelation is historically true in the form in which it is recorded in the New Testament. Given that assumption, which was the assumption of the early Christian community, it is impossible to see what other form Christian theology could have taken ; but it is a matter of common knowledge that there are many who deny the historical character of that narrative, or of certain parts of it which are commonly regarded as essential. It is therefore necessary to revert at this point to a consideration of the question whether the traditional belief in its veracity is justified. Clearly in considering this matter, as in considering those with which we have already dealt, it will be impossible to do more than summarize the main outlines of a few of the principal arguments, on the strength of which the Catholic Church justifies its stupendous claim that the life of Jesus of Nazareth is in fact a direct intervention on the part of the Creator of the universe in the history of mankind, and that its doctrines follow necessarily from the fact of that intervention.

## V

## EVIDENCES

The supreme evidence in favour of the truth of the claims of Catholic Christianity is and must always be the actual life of Jesus. For the moment we may ignore the miraculous events which are alleged to have marked His birth, His actual ministry and His resurrection, and consider simply His figure as it impresses itself on us in the record of His life and teaching in the first three Gospels, including only such "miracles" as those healings of sickness which are well-authenticated in the narratives of these Gospels, and in themselves easily paralleled by modern instances of faith-healing, healing by suggestion, and similar rather ill-understood, but not infrequent, incidents of the healing of disease by abnormal methods.

It is no part of the purpose of this book to give here any account, however brief, of that life and teaching. The Gospels are easily available, and any attempt to restate their story is bound to fail completely to reproduce the impression which they convey of a personality whose infinite superiority to the greatest heroes of history claims a veneration different in kind from anything which it is possible for man to offer to the best of his fellow-creatures. The narrative conveys an impression of absolute perfection which makes the reader feel it to be perfectly natural that one who preaches a Gospel of humility should none the less claim to correct by His immediate personal authority the deficiencies of a religious system whose divine authority He Himself recognises, and that one who preaches a Gospel of love, which forbids any man to judge his neighbour, should none the less be quite unsparing in His condemnation of those who reject

Himself. The personality of Jesus is such that the reader has no sense of inconsistency in His action in these and similar instances; he feels that he is in the presence of a personality which transcends them. His claim to immediate personal contact with God, and His lack of any personal consciousness of sin do not impress us as arrogant in the smallest degree; yet they are the exact opposites of the sense of inability to approach God except through Jesus, and the deep consciousness of personal wickedness which are characteristic of those of His followers who have approached most closely to Him in holiness. Nor is this the limit of His claims. He asks His followers to give up all the worldly advantages they possess, not for God's sake, but for His own; He claims to forgive sins in this life, and to dispose of the rewards of eternal happiness or eternal condemnation in the life to come; yet His disciples must humble themselves and become as little children, if they would enter into the kingdom of heaven. Yet all this seems as we read the Gospels, even if we ignore the miraculous element, to be perfectly natural and consistent.

The personality of Jesus, as being at once a pattern for human imitation and at the same time a revelation of a more than human ideal, is, however, something which it is only possible for us to realise by the study of the Gospels; and to these the reader must refer. It is His personality, as it is there revealed to us, that is the centre of Catholic Christianity, and it is claimed that a study of those records, in the spirit of a genuine search for the truth will show that no explanation but that of the theology of the Catholic Church will give an ultimately adequate interpretation of the facts with which those records confront us. It may be added that such a study, while it may not by itself vindicate a belief in the miraculous elements of the narrative, will convey an impression

of an actual historical figure which is beyond the inventive powers of the human imagination ; in any case, however, it is unnecessary to consider seriously theories which deny the historical character of the figure of Jesus in the first three Gospels, or the authenticity of the bulk of the teaching attributed to Him in them.

Note.—In the foregoing section as elsewhere I have ignored the Gospel of St. John for the reason that it is at present impossible to assume its historical accuracy, which many authorities deny. Before using it for the purpose of the foregoing section it would have been necessary to examine in detail the whole question of its authorship and meaning, a task which would obviously be impossible here. On the subject of this book it may however be said with safety that no account can be accepted which does not recognise that the author had at his disposal certain elements of first-hand evidence of the utmost value, and that on the other hand a good deal of it represents the teaching of Our Lord as interpreted by the experience of the first generation of Christians. (This of course does not mean that it is in any way incorrect in its interpretation ; but we cannot assume that it conveys simply the direct personal impression made on His contemporaries by Jesus of Nazareth).

The second main piece of evidence in favour of the Catholic interpretation of the person of Jesus and the Catholic account of the nature of God may be found in the field of Christian experience. By the word " experience " is meant not any abnormal religious experience, such as the sense of immediate unity of God attained to by certain great contemplative Saints, and still less any thrill of religious emotion of the kind sometimes excited in the minds of worshippers either by imposing ceremonial functions or by dramatic sermons and emotional hymns, or again by a sudden access of enthusiasm in times of private prayer. This type of emotional excitement is valueless as evidence in favour of any particular explanation of the Christian religion, if only for the reason that it is quite easily paralleled by the phenomena of non-Christian religions, often by those of religions of the most

degraded kind. Similarly the higher sense of personal communion with God attained to in contemplation would appear to find its parallels in non-Christian religions of the nobler kinds. By Christian experience is meant the fact that people of all nationalities and all classes in all the centuries which have passed since the crucifixion of Jesus have found in Him a personal revelation of God, which has satisfied the desire of man to find an adequate explanation of his being, a means of transcending the temptations, anxieties and sufferings of his material existence, and an adequate motive for living a life of the kind which presents itself to us with an authoritative claim to be regarded as good, while a life of any other kind is evil. For the distinction between good and evil in the sphere of conduct presents itself to us as possessing an immediate claim to our obedience, yet it is very difficult for philosophy to provide any rational justification of this claim, and entirely beyond the power of philosophy to suggest motives which will enable mankind in general to undertake the struggle involved in the continued attempt to follow the line of right conduct. At the best philosophy has only succeeded in the case of a few highly educated people; Christianity has succeeded in the case of the most ignorant and degraded nations and classes. Further the ethical ideal of Christianity as manifested in the person of Jesus transcends the highest conception of that ideal to which pre-Christian philosophy was ever able to attain. He embodies all that was true in it, yet He corrects and revises it so as to bring it to its logical conclusion. At the same time He does this not by the elaboration of a system but by the impression of His own personal character, and by the few and almost careless sentences in which He lays down the principles of His teaching. His ideal indeed is one which it is not within the power of man to realise; those who seem to have come nearest

to it have seen most clearly how far they fall short of His standard. Yet it remains the one faith which has proved itself universally capable of forming the dominant motive of human life. The power of Christianity to influence mankind in this way rests simply and solely in the belief that in the person of Jesus mankind has been granted a revelation of God, as the redeemer Who saves it from the dominion of sin, as the example of divine perfection which it must follow, and as the source of a divine power which alone enables it to attempt, however feebly, the task of following that example. It is easy to urge that there have been many bad Christians, and that the mere profession of Christianity is compatible with a standard of conduct entirely inconsistent with the example of Jesus; none the less the general fact of the power of Christianity to affect the lives of men in every conceivable variety of conditions remains an indisputable fact which receives fresh verification every day. The whole secret of this power lies in the belief that while Jesus is man, He is also God. Merely to accept Him as a supreme pattern of human excellence is equivalent to abandoning the whole of this power of Christianity over human life. For the attempt to imitate Him in practice is bound to prove a failure; His example is beyond imitation. The motive force of Christianity is not merely His human example, but the belief that He can and does Himself supply man with the strength to attempt the impossible task of imitating His perfection, and that in His sufferings and death He has Himself made up for the inevitable shortcomings of the best of His followers. Thus the evidence of Christian experience testifies not merely to the human perfection of Jesus but to His claims to be accepted as God; and the ultimate ground for the rejection of any lesser belief is the conviction that in practice it will fail to enable those who hold it to achieve the specifically

Christian or Christ-like character. The fact that the Catholic explanation of the personality of Jesus has justified itself in its practical power to influence human life does not indeed demonstrate its truth; but it is a very powerful argument in its favour.

It may perhaps seem strange that hitherto no mention has been made of the "miraculous" incidents which are alleged to have accompanied the birth, the ministry and the resurrection of Jesus. The reason for omitting them up to this point is that by themselves they do not furnish the kind of evidence which is most likely to convince the average English reader at the present time. In many generations, and in many parts of the world at the present moment, they furnish the most convincing proof of the claims of the Catholic account of His person, and it is perfectly possible that in the future they will again come to be regarded in this light in England. None the less by themselves they are not likely to be found convincing. Normally in reading the histories of antiquity we dismiss without hesitation a number of well-attested stories of the miraculous. A few years ago many such stories were rejected which more recent research into the power of religious faith over certain kinds of sickness has shown to be perfectly probable. None the less we should unhesitatingly reject the story of the Gospels, if we found it in any ordinary history of antiquity. Further, the mere fact that certain of the miracles of Jesus can be paralleled in modern instances of "faith-healing" will not assist the defence of the Catholic faith. For those instances of healing have often been produced as the effect of a false religion or of faith in a particular human being, whereas it is an essential part of the Catholic claim that the miracles of Jesus prove His claim to be something more than man. The mere fact that it is possible to find trustworthy parallels to some of the miracles of Jesus

may discredit any rejection of them by the pure materialist on the ground that all such things are impossible; but it will not assist the claims of Christianity.

From this point of view the crucial miracles are those of the Virgin Birth of Jesus and the bodily Resurrection on the third day after His crucifixion. The rest of His miracles may be said to stand or fall with these. Of the former event there are two accounts, which differ almost completely from one another, although they are not necessarily contradictory . Of the latter again there are several accounts which are not easy to harmonize. It is impossible here to examine these in detail. With regard to the former however it may be said that of the two extant accounts one, that of St. Matthew's Gospel, presents certain features which, if it stood by itself, might lead us to look on it with some suspicion ; it shows certain tendencies to adjust itself to the conceptions of the age as to the sort of incidents which should properly accompany a divine Incarnation. On the other hand it must be noted that these conceptions are mainly to be found in non-Jewish religions, and it is rather peculiar to find them in this Gospel, which in its general outlook adheres closely to orthodox Jewish traditions. (This argument however must be advanced with some reserve : Judaism had been considerably influenced at the time of the birth of Jesus by non-Jewish religious ideas). The other account is that of St. Luke. In this we are met by a very remarkable phenomenon. The writer of the Gospel was an intimate friend and companion of St. Paul, and has certainly in some parts of his work allowed the narrative to be coloured by specifically Pauline ideas. Now, if we once suppose that the primitive Christians, in a well-meaning but misguided spirit of piety, were in the practice of introducing miraculous features into their narratives of the life of Jesus, it would be easy to suppose

that St. Paul, whose theology certainly tended to concentrate attention on the superhuman aspect of the person of Jesus, might have introduced a Virgin-birth to justify his teaching. But it almost passes comprehension that, if he made such an attempt, he should not in his extant writings make any allusion to such a doctrine. And it is entirely impossible to explain the fact that the narrative of the Virgin-birth as recorded in St. Luke's Gospel should in its general tone and tendency not merely show no trace of St. Paul's influence, but actually show very marked traces of the influence of that element in the primitive Church which was most strongly opposed to St. Paul's whole point of view. Yet this is in fact the case. The narrative of the birth of Our Lord as given by St. Luke insists on a general atmosphere of primitive Pharisaical piety, realising itself in a strict observance of the Jewish Law. St. Paul might have invented a Virgin-birth, and he would necessarily have to admit that the early infancy of Jesus was passed in circles which observed the Law; he certainly would not have insisted, as does the narrative of St. Luke, on the atmosphere of legal piety and Pharisaical holiness which would be bound to tell in favour of the claim of the Jewish Christians that all Christians must continue to observe the Jewish Law. Historical criticism, taken by itself, must tend to confirm the truth of this narrative.

With regard to the Resurrection the question is simpler. The narratives of the Gospels may not be easy to reconcile; but they are not our sole evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. This is implied on every page of the Pauline Epistles, and it is implied yet more clearly in the mere fact of the survival of the Christian movement. At the moment of the crucifixion the followers of Jesus were utterly broken and dispirited; within a few weeks they were preaching with the utmost boldness that He

had risen from the dead, in spite of the fact that by doing so they were inviting persecution from the authorities of the Jewish nation. If Jesus had in fact appeared to them risen from the dead, their behaviour is intelligible ; otherwise it is not. If however we accept the resurrection as a historical fact, and to refuse to do so creates a historical problem almost as difficult as the acceptance of the Resurrection itself is, we cannot reasonably reject the most clearly attested feature of the whole story of the resurrection of Jesus, that the first intimation of the fact to His followers was the finding that His tomb was empty on the Sunday morning after His crucifixion.

Hence it may fairly be claimed that the evidence merely as evidence on these two points is extremely strong. By itself this fact would not convince us. But the evidence does not stand alone. It is not legitimate to isolate the various strands of evidence as if they were entirely independent of each other. We have seen already that the figure of Jesus in the Gospels and the whole field of Christian experience support the belief that in Him we find a person of a more than human order. The historical narrative of His birth and resurrection, and of certain incidents of His public life confirm this belief. The effect of these three lines of evidence is cumulative, and it may be claimed that the first two tend to support the conviction that the appearance in the world of such a being would naturally differ from the ordinary course of a human life. From this point of view we may, if we choose, regard the so-called miracles of the Gospels not as miracles, in the popular sense of the word, which implies a reversal of the uniform order of nature, but as the natural and normal phenomena which the appearance of such a being in this world must necessarily produce ; this is merely a question of words. On the other hand the strength of the historical evidence in favour of events

of this kind reacts favourably on the two former arguments and gives them a fresh confirmation of its own.

There are two subsidiary arguments which may be briefly considered here.

The first is the argument from prophecy. The writings of the Jewish prophets foretold in various forms the coming of a saviour of the nation. As interpreted by the later period of Judaism at the time of the Incarnation some of these were strikingly appropriate to the life of Jesus. Hence it has been argued that the fact that the early prophets foretold His coming so accurately is a proof that they were inspired by God, and that they received a divine fulfilment. While, however, the argument was valid under the method of interpretation of the Old Testament, which regarded it as a verbally inspired document, it has been deprived of much of its force by modern investigations into the meaning, authorship and composition of the books of the Old Testament. It should be noted that Our Lord Himself does not use the writings of the prophets in this literal way. Either He uses individual texts to prove some point not absolutely but as against Jewish opponents; or, as in the case of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, He deliberately acts in such a manner as to claim to fulfil in His actions a prophecy recognised by the Jews as applicable to the Messiah; or He employs one particular passage from the old prophecies and proves that it is in fact applicable to Himself as the Messiah. This passage is that which deals with the rejection of the true servant of God by those to whom He is sent. This prophecy (Isaiah liii) was not regarded by the Jews as applying to the Messiah, and as used by Our Lord it is rather to be regarded as Messianic from the fact that He gives it such an application and proves His method of applying it to be just. He does not base His

claim on the literal fulfilment of prophetic texts, as the old writers did.

In general, however, it is to be noticed that the development of Jewish thought in the three centuries preceding the Incarnation tended to change the conception of the Messiah from that of a conquering earthly monarch into that of a superhuman being sent by God to reward the righteous and to punish the wicked, and that the reward expected was changing from earthly happiness of a rather material kind into an eternal reward of spiritual blessedness. In this respect Jewish thought shows a remarkable preparation for His coming. The same may be said of much of the development of Gentile ideas. The desire for a religion which would enable man to attain to a close personal relation with God in this life and the assurance of personal immortality hereafter was very widespread ; and this desire furnished a natural opening for the first preachers of Christianity to make their message heard. Similarly the political development of the Macedonian Empires and their replacement by the consolidated Roman Empire during this period resulted in the breaking down of national barriers and national languages, and substituted for them a cosmopolitan civilisation with more or less uniform methods of thought, which was admirably adapted for the diffusion of Christianity. It is in this, more than in particular fulfilments of individual texts of the prophets, that we find a divine preparation for the Incarnation ; although certain of those texts do find a striking fulfilment in Jesus, it is hardly likely that they will now be regarded as convincing by those who are not already Christians. The general preparation of the world for His coming is however an important piece of evidence, though it can never take more than a subsidiary place as a general argument on behalf of Christianity.

It has already been noted that the natural line for Christianity to take in appealing to the Gentile world would have been to regard Jesus as a being of a supernatural order sent by God to redeem mankind from the evil into which it had fallen, but not as possessing so absolute an authority as to make it impossible for the Christian to recognise that other cults which preached similar systems of redemption were also in their measure true revelations of God. Such a conception would have been natural to the age, and would also have enabled the Church to avoid persecution by allowing its members to render outward allegiance to the civic and imperial cults of the Graeco-Roman world. Christianity deliberately refused the line of least resistance, and chose the hardest. We can now see that it was to this choice that it owed its survival; but the instinctive refusal of the Church to take the easy and natural course in the face of persecution is a strong subsidiary proof of its supernatural claims.

In the same way it may be maintained that the whole history of the triumph of the Church over the opposition of all the strongest forces of the heathen world is a confirmation of its divine origin; until the hour of her triumph the Church was the religion of the most insignificant classes of Society, with every natural advantage on the side of her enemies.

For these reasons in particular it may be claimed that the Catholic conception of the person of Jesus and the nature of God is not merely the only possible development of Christianity which is compatible with the original Christian tradition, but also the revealed truth of God to man, i.e., that Catholic Christianity is not merely the legitimate explanation of the faith of the first Christians, but also that it is objectively true. It cannot be claimed that these or any other arguments will demonstrate its

truth in the strictly logical sense of the word. Demonstration in this sense means a proof so absolute that it is impossible for any sane human being to reject it, and such demonstration is unattainable outside the sphere of pure mathematics. The Christian religion has always held that belief is impossible without the divine gift of faith ; but this divine gift will never be withheld from those who approach the study of the Christian religion with an honest desire to seek for the truth in it. It cannot be claimed that these or any other arguments will convince the hostile critic ; it can only be claimed that, in spite of the inadequacy with which they are put forward here, they will be sufficient to prove that the Catholic conception of Christianity does not involve the surrender of human reason to a series of incredible dogmas. For a full statement of the Catholic doctrine and the grounds on which it claims to be the truth revealed by God in the person of His Son the reader must consult the works of theologians. But he will not find any proof of the truth of the Christian religion unless he is prepared to approach the person of Jesus revealed in the Gospels and in the sacramental system of the Church, seeking to find the truth, just as he will not make any progress in any branch of learning or in any practical art, unless he approaches it with a genuine desire to investigate what it has to offer, and a general if vague belief that it has in it something of value. The ultimate argument for Christianity must always be that of the disciple who brought his friend to Jesus with the argument " Come and see." But the same argument is in all cases the only one which will convert those who refuse to admit that any particular department of human effort can lead to any valuable results. To those who are honestly ready to " come and see " the divine gift of faith will not be lacking.

NOTE.—The arguments given above mainly deal with the objections put forward by those who either reject all belief in Christianity as a divine revelation, or regard it as being divine only in the sense that Jesus had a peculiarly close sense of personal union with God and a peculiar insight into the divine nature, although Himself belonging simply to the natural order of humanity. The latter view, usually described as Liberalism, rests in fact on a general refusal to believe in the possibility of a direct divine intervention in the affairs of human life, which is a survival of mid-Victorian materialism, and is a very unscientific attempt to use modern methods of scriptural criticism to eliminate the miraculous elements of the Gospel narratives.

It is necessary here to notice another attempt to avoid the admitted difficulty involved in the Catholic conception of a particular divine intervention in the order of the world, while preserving as much as possible of the Christian tradition. This is the system generally known as "Modernism." It takes many forms, and the name is only a general description of several more or less similar attempts to solve the difficulty. Liberalism differs from Modernism in that Liberalism starts from a Protestant point of view which regards the Bible as the sole source of Christian doctrine. The disintegration of the Bible by certain schools of scriptural criticism has led Liberals to see in Jesus only a remarkably gifted man, worthy of admiration as a supreme religious teacher. Its obvious weakness lies in the fact that it provides no reason for supposing that His ethical teaching is in any sense final, and that it fails to provide any conception of a divine atonement for sin or a divine power enabling the believer to lead a new life. Modernism differs in that it regards the Christian doctrine of God as revealed in Jesus, and the sacramental system of the Church as being the truest, and indeed the only satisfactory account of God and His relations to man, and the only possible means by which man can satisfactorily approach God. At the same time it regards the narratives of the Gospels as being to a very large extent true only in a "mythological" sense, i.e., they are not historically true, since many of the events recorded did not actually happen; but they are true in the sense that they express in the form of a story the true nature of God, His love for man and the way in which man should approach Him. The historical figure of Jesus underlying the Gospels is from this point of view less important than the figure of Jesus as a mythical revelation of God in human form recorded in them. The strength of this conception lies in the fact that it does endeavour to preserve Christianity as a religious system, enabling the individual to have access to God. Its obvious weakness lies in the fact that the devotion of Christians to the person of Jesus, which is the one ultimate source of all Christianity, depends for its existence on the fact that

Christians believe Him to be very God revealing Himself as man, and suffering all the sorrows of man for their sakes, and thereby delivering them from the power of sin. The destruction of the basis of historical fact inevitably brings down with it the superstructure of the Catholic system, leaving at best only an academic system of belief as to the nature of God. Such a religion could not in fact convert the world unless indeed its historical untruth were sedulously concealed from the uneducated public. It is a little difficult to accept as the highest possible revelation of God a religion which depends for its value on the fact that the uneducated believer is asked to accept as historical that which the educated knows to be only mythology, especially when, as in the present instance it is precisely the mythological element which is the attractive force. Christian devotion has from the outset concentrated itself on the belief in the Virgin Birth of Jesus, His atoning death and His triumphant Resurrection; and these are the details which any form of Modernism must relegate to the sphere of mythology, if it is to succeed in reconciling Christianity to its modern critics. It is safe to put out of court any attempt to avoid the undoubted difficulties of the Christian faith which does not justify their power of arousing the devotion and reforming the life of the Christian.

## VI

## HOLY SCRIPTURE

The Church from the beginning found herself in possession of certain writings accepted by the Jews as a divinely inspired account of the dealings of God with man, the books of the Old Testament, which present many problems which must be ignored here. Meanwhile the Church was compelled to make use of writing for her own purposes. The first Christian books that have come down to us are the letters which St. Paul wrote to certain of his converts in Galatia, and at Thessalonica and Corinth, and a letter of introduction sent in advance to the Chris-

tians at Rome, who had been converted by others, in order to pave the way for a visit which he hoped to make to the capital of the civilised world. All these letters were written prior to the year 55 A. D. and within twenty-five years of the crucifixion. About the same period were compiled two documents of still greater importance, the Gospel of St. Mark and a nameless collection of sayings of Jesus, which has not survived in an independent form, but has been embodied with very little alteration in the Gospels which bear the names of St. Matthew and St. Luke. Between the years 55 and 70 were written the letters of St. Paul to the Ephesians, the Colossians and the Philippians, and the letters to individual friends known as the Pastoral Epistles. The authenticity of all these letters except the Philippians is more or less disputed; in the case of the two first-named books the grounds for doubting that they are the work of St. Paul are entirely negligible; in the case of the Pastoral Epistles they are more considerable, but by no means conclusive.

In this period also fall the Epistle of St. James, a document which displays the ascetic piety of the early Hebrew Christians, (the doubts thrown by certain critics on this work show a complete incapacity to grasp the outlook of this portion of the primitive Christian community), and the first Epistle of St. Peter. To the following decade belong probably the Epistle to the Hebrews, the compilation of the two Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke (the greater portions of which are made up of the two earlier collections of records of the life of Jesus, with important additions from other sources), and the Acts of the Apostles. The writings attributed to St. John belong apparently to some period about the year 90 A. D.; but both their date and authorship are most uncertain. It may be regarded as fairly certain that the author of the Apocalypse is different

from the author of the Gospel and Epistles, and it is highly probable that the Apocalypse itself is based on a collection of Christian " prophecies " from several sources. The second Epistle attributed to St. Peter is not his work ; its value lies in the fact that it shows the stage of Christian development in which the hope of the early return of Jesus in glory was abandoned, and the reasoning by which the difficulty caused by the non-fulfilment of the earlier expectations of an imminent second coming were met.

Now these books were written by various Christians to meet various needs. The composition of the Gospels was due to the desire to put on record the life and teaching of Jesus, at a time when it began to be impossible, owing to the development of the Church, to rely simply on the oral teaching of those who had seen Him in the flesh. The Pauline Epistles were composed to settle doubts and controversies among the Gentile converts, and the Acts to record the early development of the Church and to justify as against certain Jewish critics the part played by St. Paul in that development. There was no general intention of composing a new body of sacred books to be added to those inherited by the Church from Judaism. Nor was the need for such a collection of sacred books felt until the growth of doctrinal disputes as to the exact nature of the personality and teaching of Jesus made it necessary to ascertain exactly what the first generations of Christians, who had been witnesses of His ministry and friends of His disciples, had really taught. The task was rendered more urgent by the prevalence of works falsely attributed to the earliest disciples, in which various new and erroneous doctrines were advanced. For these reasons various groups of Christian communities selected certain of the early Christian writings known to them, and composed authoritative bodies of literature, which locally gained a position as Holy Scripture, and

were venerated as equal to the old Jewish writings. As regards the bulk of the New Testament these local collections were identical in character, though there was in the first instance a considerable variation of belief as to whether certain of the less important documents should be included, and whether other ancient Christian documents of undisputed orthodoxy should not also be recognised. This variation was natural, since some of these writings were only intended by their authors for local circulation, and were not known in certain Christian circles at all; while there was a natural tendency in any particular region to exaggerate the value of a document which had for years been associated with its growth in the Christian religion. By degrees, however, the growth of the Church led to more frequent communications between the Christians of various regions, with the result that a general agreement arose as to the books which should be included among the genuine testimonies of the earliest generations of Christianity, and those which should be rejected. By 400 A. D. the books which at present form our New Testament had in all parts of Christendom gained recognition as the Christian sacred books, which, together with those inherited by the Church from Judaism, contained the full written record of the revelation of God to man. Other records of the early generations of Christianity were relegated to a secondary place, as merely human documents; in certain cases where they had been put forward in the interest of forms of teaching which the Church had rejected they were deliberately destroyed.

On the other hand the books which were included in the Scriptures were regarded as being of more than any purely human character. In the first instance they were chosen on the ground that they were written by those who had personally witnessed the life of Jesus or that of His

disciples. In point of fact this belief was in certain cases wrong; thus it appears that the Epistle to the Hebrews was included on the ground that it was the work of St. Paul, whereas in fact it is not, and does not claim to be. Similarly the second Epistle attributed to St. Peter and professing to be by him is of later origin than his death. The fact that it professes to be by him does not justify us in regarding it as a forgery, since it was common at the time to put forward writings under the names of eminent teachers of the past. This practice was particularly prevalent among the Jews, and it does not seem that there was in many cases any real intention to deceive. Again, the books supposed to be written by St. John the son of Zebedee may not be by him; the oldest traditions witness to some doubt on this point. In any case however the question of authorship was not the only point considered in the selection of the canonical writings. Many books were current under the names of the great Apostles which were rejected on the ground that they contained teaching incompatible with that of the great bulk of the canonical books, of whose character there had never been any doubt, while others of great antiquity were rejected as being of too little value to be included in the Scriptures. The writings which were accepted were, however, not simply regarded as the work of individual Christians, however eminent. They could not merely on these grounds have claimed an authority equal to that of the Old Testament. For the Church from the outset accepted the Jewish belief that the books of the Old Testament were written under the influence of divine inspiration, and it was claimed that the new books also, written during the period after the Resurrection of Jesus, were influenced by that initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit which had been vouchsafed to the Church in the earliest stages of its growth. Although the power of God the Holy Ghost

was still active in the Church in the later years when the books of the New Testament were selected, yet it was believed that their authors had received some special measure of divine inspiration to assist them in compiling the records of the life of Jesus and the teaching of the earliest generations of Christianity. This belief was current from a period long before the final selection of the exact list of canonical books ; from a time soon after the beginning of the second century A. D. it was recognised that their text was sacred. For this reason they were carefully preserved in their original form, and not, as was the general custom of the age, subjected to revision and expansion to suit the needs of particular times and places.

Thus the books of the New Testament were and are regarded by the Church as possessing a double character. They are human, since they are the work of ordinary men, influenced by ordinary human considerations. Yet they are also the work of God, since the impulse to write came ultimately from the Holy Spirit, even though it presented itself to the consciousness of the author through the medium of human motives. For instance it would seem that St. Luke in writing his account of the life of Jesus and the growth of the early Christian community was conscious simply of a desire to place on permanent record all that he could gather from the writings and personal reminiscences of those who had been eyewitnesses of the events he narrates ; (he had himself been an eyewitness of some of them). He had also the intention of justifying St. Paul as against certain opponents. But it is believed that behind these conscious motives there was the action of the Holy Ghost ; and that in the compilation of the books themselves he was aided by His guidance. It is not necessary to suppose that he was at any time consciously aware of it ; it is certainly not necessary to believe that he wrote in some kind of a trance

in which he merely wrote what was dictated to him by a supernatural power, so that every word of his books, (and of the other books of the Bible) is immediately divine in its origin and not to be criticised without blasphemy. It is not even necessary to believe that he was miraculously preserved from the natural liability to make mistakes in the order of his narrative, or to colour his account of individual incidents in order to emphasize some particular point of view; for it is not necessary to believe that the guidance vouchsafed to him was such as to override entirely the inevitable imperfection of all human writing. On the other hand the inspiration of the Scriptures is not to be regarded as simply the kind of "inspiration," which may be recognised in the works of great artists of any kind. For the Church claims that the inspiration given to the canonical writers was such that their works, if rightly interpreted, lay down the main outlines of the whole system of belief which the Church subsequently developed, and that any interpretation of them which leads to a different system of belief can ultimately be shown to be incompatible with the teaching of the Scriptures as a whole. Hence the claim of divine guidance must be recognised as implying that, although the writers of the New Testament were not explicitly conscious of the system of Christian doctrine which was developed by the Church in later ages, yet they were preserved from writing anything which formally contradicts any element in that system of doctrine.

Now it is manifest that this is a very sweeping claim. On the other hand it is not contrary to reason. The origin of the motives which lead an author to compose a book and guide him in his selection of matters to include and omit, and in his choice of words in which to express his thought, must ultimately remain a mystery, as much as the origin of any of our thoughts. Even if it be possible

in certain cases to trace our conscious ideas into the region of our "unconscious minds," there is in the last resort a point beyond which it is impossible to penetrate. The Christian claim is that in the last resort the decisive factor that swayed the writers of Scripture was the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. This claim is of course one which it is impossible to demonstrate. The defence of it depends on the arguments already advanced in this book. If it be admitted that the figure of Jesus, as presented in the Gospels is such that it can only ultimately be explained by the Catholic system of doctrine, and if it be further admitted that the effect of His life and teaching can only be explained by the belief that it is in fact a direct manifestation of God Himself on the scene of human history, there is nothing improbable in the claim that a special measure of divine assistance should be vouchsafed to the generation which witnessed that manifestation, in order to enable them to record it for the benefit of subsequent generations. It may be added that the claim that the authors did in fact receive such assistance, and that the Church was directed by divine guidance in her choice of the canonical books, is enormously strengthened by a comparison of them with the other writings of the same stage of Christian development which have come down to us. These writings often enjoyed in certain areas the position of canonical books. Yet they almost invariably fall very far short of the books which ultimately obtained admission to the New Testament both in their general merits and also in their willingness to include grotesque and impossible beliefs, which could not have been received as part of the Christian faith without bringing it into discredit. Yet these ideas were often not regarded as grotesque by the generation in which the Scriptures were written or the generations in which they were selected. Often it is fairly clear that the

writers of canonical books did in fact share such beliefs ; they use language which seems to imply their acceptance of them, although they do not insert them into their formal teaching. This point may be urged as a subsidiary claim in support of the belief that the writers enjoyed a special divine inspiration ; the general support of that claim however must always rest on the general defence of the Christian revelation.

# Part II

# The Application of the Catholic Religion

# I

## SIN AND GRACE

Hitherto we have been investigating the fundamental doctrines of the Catholic religion as to the nature of God revealed in the person of Jesus. We have next to consider the means by which the individual Christian is enabled to secure for himself the benefits made available for him by the fact that in the person of Jesus God became man, died for the forgiveness of men's sins, and placed at their disposal a new power of living in accordance with His will. For the essential nature of God as revealed in Jesus is His perfect goodness, and it is only in so far as he is at least endeavouring to live up to that pattern of divine holiness that man is able to approach to God or enter into communion with Him. At the same time it is a matter of daily experience that man is by himself entirely unable to live up to that standard in any way, and that his natural inclinations tend in many, if not most, directions to lead him into a course of life entirely contrary to it. Hence the revelation of God in Jesus would have been of little value, if it had not been accompanied by the gift of a new power to enable man at least to strive after the attainment of holiness. The best of the Jews at the time of the Incarnation realised that the Law with its system of external observances was only of value as a means for the attainment of holiness, and also that it was inadequate to enable man to attain to that standard of holiness which it held before him. The ancient Jewish cosmogony which forms the opening of the Old Testament ascribes this inherent weakness of man to an original act of sin com-

mitted by the first created human beings; from their first disobedience there followed a taint of sin to which all their descendants were made subject.

The importance of the story lies of course not in its historical value, for it was only a mistaken conception of the nature of scriptural truth that led to the attempt to defend the literal accuracy of the narrative when it was first seriously questioned in the nineteenth century, but in its recognition of the fact that man does as a matter of daily experience naturally incline to evil rather than to good, and its insistence that this tendency to evil is not due to God, Who, being Himself perfect, cannot be the author of evil. There is indeed here a theological problem of some difficulty, for it is difficult to hold as a matter of faith that this general tendency to evil is the result of one original act of sin, committed by an original ancestor of man, at that stage in the history of the world at which there first emerged in the order of evolution a being which was capable of acting as the organism in which the divinely given faculties of the soul could exercise themselves. It is sufficient for our present purpose to insist on the undoubted fact that man as we know him is a being partly belonging to the purely natural order in which moral evil does not exist, (for creatures of the purely natural order are without moral responsibility which exists only where there is a knowledge of good and evil, and the power to choose freely between them), yet also belongs in part to the supernatural order and was created in order that he might raise himself from the natural to the supernatural level. Yet by himself he must inevitably fail to do so, for his natural tendency is to prefer the lower to the higher level of existence. A full investigation of the whole problem is impossible here: it is sufficient to recognise the facts of human nature.

The Catholic religion offers then a system by which

man is enabled to overcome this obstacle of sin, and fulfil the purpose for which he was created. That purpose of course is not simply to attain to holiness or moral perfection. The purpose for which man was created is to promote the glory of God by serving Him in this world and by attaining in a future life to a full perfection of his being in which he will be united to God by love and yet retain his own personal individuality. The functions of man in that state can only be described in terms of metaphor drawn from this life, which must at the best be inadequate for their purpose; it is best to describe the activity of man in his perfect state as the offering of praise and glory to God, but it must always be remembered that in using this or any other phrase we are employing human language to describe something which the human mind cannot conceive. The advantage of this particular conception is that it recognises that the object for which man was created is not his own happiness or his own perfection, but God. Perfection is necessary since it is only as made perfect that man can adequately fulfil the purpose for which he was created; but the purpose itself is that supernatural activity which is best described as the praising of God.[1] Our next step then is to consider how a being who by himself invariably tends towards evil can be enabled to rise to that state in which he is able to devote his whole being to the end for which he was created, namely the promotion of the glory of God.

[1] It may seem strange that no reference has been made to the service of others as part of the end for which man was created. Ultimately however the service of others is not the end of man, for such service is only of value in so far as it is either consciously or unconsciously done out of love of God and with the desire to promote His glory. In man's present state such service of others must always form a large part of the Christian life; but Christianity looks beyond this life to a state in which all mankind, except those who have finally

The solution of the problem lies in the recognition of the fact that by himself man is entirely unable to raise himself out of his natural state of sinfulness. In that state he is unable to please God, or to deserve anything but His displeasure, for the simple reason that his own preference is always to reject the good and to choose the evil. Yet he does so in spite of the fact that he knows, even if imperfectly, that he is rejecting what he recognises to be good and preferring what he recognises to be evil. Thus he is to some extent at least to blame for his preference of evil and therefore deserving of punishment; while God, being perfectly just, cannot simply ignore his guilt and remit the punishment which the sins of man have deserved. Such forgiveness of sin is indeed right in man, for all men are sinners and therefore have no right to judge one another by the strict standard of justice untempered by mercy; but God Who is perfectly just cannot simply ignore the sins of men. It was to meet this hopeless alienation of man from God that God himself became man. Man had deserved punishment, but could not by any suffering he might undergo atone for the injury which by his sins he had offered to the majesty of God. The death of Jesus on the Cross was an act of

chosen evil rather than good, will have attained to their perfection, and will be occupied eternally in the perfect fulfilment of the end for which they were created. In such a state it is difficult to see how there would be any room for the service of others, since all men will have full possession of all that they need. Hence the service of others seems to be confined to the existing order of the world rather than to belong to the final end of man. So in the Gospels Our Lord commends those who have performed works of mercy on the ground that in the last resort they are rendered to Himself, i.e., to God. The point is of some importance in view of the modern tendency to see in the service of others the ultimate end of man. The Christian point of view is that it is only the fulfilment of the end of man in so far as it is one of the highest forms in which in the present state of existence we are able to offer our service to God.

Divine mercy, by which God Himself bore that burden of suffering which the sins of man had deserved. The fact that Jesus was God rendered His death infinitely precious in the sight of God, and therefore sufficient and more than sufficient to atone for the whole tale of human sin.[1]

This act of divine forgiveness was a free gift which man had done nothing to deserve. But the mercy of God did not end with forgiveness. With the death of Jesus and His resurrection from the dead there was bestowed on man a new dispensation in which he was made capable of receiving the continual help of God, without which he could never hope to escape from the old dominion of sin. This divine gift by which man is enabled to overcome sin and to offer acceptable service to God is known as grace. It is only in so far as the actions of man proceed fron this divine power working within him that he is able to do anything that is good. Of course it is not to be supposed that it was impossible for man to do any good thing before the death and resur-

[1] It should be observed that while the death of Jesus on the Cross must be regarded from the human point of view as a single historical incident in the order of history, God Himself is outside the order of time. Thus the crucifixion is the expression in terms of the temporal order of a fact which in its essential character is timeless, namely the willingness of God to offer His Son, and the willingness of God the Son to offer Himself to atone for the sins of the world. This explanation removes the difficulty sometimes caused by rather crude statements of the doctrine of the atonement, which seem to imply that before the Incarnation the world lay completely under the wrath of God, which was only appeased by the fact that at that moment the Son offered Himself to placate the divine wrath of the Father. Such statements are of course merely popular presentations whose weakness is due to the fact that in all theology we are dealing with a historical revelation of eternal facts, which human thought cannot fully comprehend. The same explanation shows how it was possible for man before the Incarnation to know and obey, however imperfectly, the will of God. See further c.v.

rection of Jesus. But all good actions done before the atonement had become a fact of human history were only done in virtue of the fact, as we should say in human terms, that God foresaw the atoning death of His Son, or in language which more adequately represents a fact which passes our understanding, that the atonement is from the point of view of God an eternal fact. Thus all good actions done before the Incarnation were done by the grace of God, just as the good actions of unbelievers and heathen now are, in so far as they are good, done by the aid of a divine gift of grace of which the recipient is ignorant. Since therefore man can only attain to holiness or perform any action acceptable to God by means of a divine gift of grace, the Catholic system of religion is the means by which this gift is normally made available for the needs of man.[1] The new fact involved in the Christian dispensation is that it brought to man a full knowledge of the means of obtaining this gift, and a system in which this gift was promised to all who should seek it in the appointed way. What had hitherto been only partially revealed was now made clear. Hitherto man had been

[1] The doctrine of grace rests, apart from revelation, on the immediate facts of Christian experience that the forgiveness of past sin and the power to render acceptable service to God proceed ultimately from a divine gift, which man could never deserve. It has largely been moulded by St. Paul's personal experiences which have left a permanent mark on this side of Christian doctrine. None the less a moment's reflection will show that the view that man by himself can do anything pleasing to God implies ultimately a low and anthropomorphic conception of the divine nature, since it implies that a purely human action can be acceptable to the Creator of the universe. It is otherwise if good actions are seen to be due to the action of God Himself working within us. Similarly it involves a low ideal of the standard of human perfection, for it fails to recognise the absolute standard of perfection demanded by Jesus, and the impossibility of attaining it by any merely human efforts. But if the attainment of perfection is impossible except by a divine gift, it follows that all actions, in so far as they tend towards it must, proceed from a similar cause.

compelled to seek after God, if haply he might find Him ; henceforward the means of access to God was made available to all men by a Divine covenant, which guaranteed that all who sought for God by the appointed means should be certain of finding Him. This possibility was due to the free gift of grace rendered available for mankind by the death of Jesus. By His own efforts man could never attain to the true knowledge of God or offer him any acceptable service. At the same time this gift of grace is not given to man in such a manner as to override the freedom of his will ; all can obtain it who are prepared to submit to or co-operate with the action of grace upon their souls ; but it remains within the free choice of man to decide whether he will accept or refuse it. In the succeeding chapters we shall consider the means which the Catholic religion provides for obtaining this Divine gift of grace, without which it is impossible for man to fulfil the purpose for which he was created, namely the praise and service of God, or to attain to that state of holiness which is a necessary condition for the fulfilment of that end. It is always to be remembered that, for the Christian, holiness is always the Christ-like character, that is, a character which is so moulded by the action of the grace of God that it resembles as nearly as possible the character of God as revealed in terms of humanity in the person of Jesus.

## II

## COMMUNION WITH GOD—PRAYER

Since grace is a gift of God, it is natural that in order to obtain it, man should have recourse to Him from Whom it proceeds. It is indeed possible for God, with Whom

allt hings are possible, to bestow grace on those who do not seek it. Hence there are, at least apparently, cases in which sinners or unbelievers who have persistently refused to admit the claims of God, have been suddenly converted by an overpowering gift of grace, which has completely subdued their hostility. Even here, however, there must necessarily be a voluntary submission to the action of grace, which renders conversion in the last resort an act of surrender on the part of the human will. In any case such conversions are abnormal, and no man can presume on the mercy of God by continuing in sin and expecting that God will, without any co-operation on his own part, bestow on him a sudden gift of conversion. Normally those who would obtain grace must seek for it, possessing the full assurance that those who seek for it will not fail to find it. In point of fact the mere action of turning towards God is in itself only rendered possible by a gift of grace from God: and it carries with it a reciprocal action of God towards us. Of this reciprocal action we normally have no conscious feeling at the outset of the Christian life; frequently Christians never have any conscious experience of the action of God upon their souls, at any rate none of which it can be said with any certainty that it is not an illusion produced by the excitement of the emotions. Our knowledge of the fact that we cannot turn towards God without receiving from Him a corresponding gift of grace rests on faith in the promises of Jesus, confirmed by the effect on our lives of any serious attempt to do so. This effect is to be measured not by any passing phase of emotion but by our growth in the love of God and by our development in the Christian character. Thus, although we are not necessarily or normally conscious of any action of God towards us, yet we believe that even the initial act by which man turns to God is really an act by which he submits to the action

of divine grace, since we are assured by faith that our action is but one side of the process by which the soul receives grace, and further that although it is all-important that we should make the initial act of surrender, yet this act is but a small and unimportant matter as compared with the action of God towards us.

Communion between God and the soul may take the form either of immediate personal access to God of the kind usually described as prayer, or it may take the form of some external action to the proper performance of which a special promise of grace is attached. The latter form of communion with God is the sacramental system of the Catholic Church and will be considered in the following chapters. The reason for postponing it for the moment is that the benefits which the sacraments convey to us depend in part on the presence within our souls of a certain attitude towards God, which may in the widest sense be described as one of prayer, prayer being used here to cover all those processes by which the soul disposes itself towards God, whether the attitude consciously present to the mind be primarily active or passive, i.e., whether the mental process be primarily one of active endeavour to approach to God or of submission and surrender to His action on the soul. It is obvious that without some such attitude of the soul towards God the benefits of the Sacraments will be lost ; a certain disposition is required, if they are to produce their proper effect. We shall return to this point in the following chapter. For the moment we shall consider briefly the Catholic conception of prayer.

Prayer does not of course consist in the utterance of words in coherent speech, or in personal presence at any corporate act of worship ; yet there are numbers of Christians who have apparently no idea that any other form of prayer exists or is possible. The essence of prayer is

the endeavour of the soul to approach to God; formal words are of value only in so far as they assist this endeavour of the soul to approach to God; they are harmful where, as may easily be the case, they hinder it. Prayer is in its essence the attempt of the soul to enter into communion with God.

From this point of view we may briefly consider the methods by which the soul can dispose itself for this communion of which the principal are vocal and mental prayer. By vocal prayer are meant all forms of prayer in which the soul addresses itself to God in words which are either actually uttered with the lips or explicitly present to the mind although not actually uttered. Such prayers are obviously necessary for those who are only beginners in religion, since the mind is normally trained by the learning of set forms of speech which are calculated to excite the emotions which it is desired to produce. For instance we train a child in good manners in order to produce the virtue of courtesy; similarly we teach a child to say prayers in order that it may learn its proper relation to God. Such prayers may either take the form of requests for particular benefits, whether temporal or spiritual, or they may take, as in the one prayer taught by Jesus to His disciples and known to all Christians as the Lord's Prayer, the form of a general submission to the will of God, and a request for all such temporal and spiritual blessings as it is the will of God to bestow upon ourselves and all mankind.

It has been suggested that vocal prayer is primarily necessary for those who are beginners in religion: but it is essential for all Christians to remember that in this life they can never rise above the status of beginners. It is therefore impossible for Christians ever to rise above the necessity for a continued use of vocal prayer. There have been times when Christians have endeavoured to do

so with disastrous results. The effect of the attempt has been to breed a spirit of pride, which leads to forgetfulness of the attitude of humility and dependence which is proper for man, when he comes before the throne of God. It exposes the Christian to the constant danger of supposing that he is being favoured with some special measure of divine inspiration, which allows him to ignore the duty of exercising the ordinary Christian virtues. Further it encourages him to suppose that he can, without reference to the whole body of Christian experience, decide for himself as to the relative importance of particular aspects of the Christian revelation, and the truth or falsehood of particular aspects of Christian doctrine.

For this reason the Church insists on the necessity of a certain measure of corporate vocal prayer as the duty of all Christians. Such prayer emphasises both the double aspect of man's nature as a spiritual and material being, (for the use of speech is proper to man only in so far as he is a material being), and also keeps him in constant memory of the fact that he is a member of a body, the whole Christian society, and that he cannot think that his relations with God are a matter which concerns himself alone. Thus the Church has from the very earliest times attached to the bare forms of words necessary for the administration of the sacraments suitable utterances of prayer and worship. In particular the sacrament which figures most largely in the regular religious life of the Christian, the Eucharist, is always celebrated to the accompaniment of a whole service of praise, thanksgiving, intercession, penitence and instruction, attendance at which has from the beginning been enjoined as the weekly act of worship binding on all Christians. In this way a certain minimum of corporate vocal worship is imposed on all: while those who by their profession are particularly pledged to devote their lives to the ser-

vice of God are bound also to the daily recital of certain forms of vocal prayer. It was originally the practice for those pledged to a life of service of God to recite these offices of vocal prayer, (composed principally of Psalms and readings from the Scriptures) together, as acts of corporate worship: at present it is usual for the clergy to recite them in private, the corporate recitation of them being confined to those who live in religious communities: it seems likely that experience will show that the spiritual value of private recitation (in which the individual unites himself mentally with the whole Catholic Church) far outweighs the importance of adhering to the primitive practice of corporate recitation, and that the exercise of these forms of prayer will tend increasingly to be performed in private. At the same time other forms of corporate vocal worship have been introduced o foster the devotion of ordinary Christians, who otherwise might fall into the danger of forgetting completely the duty of approaching God in prayer; while other verbal forms are suggested for the private use of the faithful either daily or as the occasion may suggest to their piety. In all cases the value of these forms of prayer lies in their aptitude to produce a certain attitude of the soul towards God by exciting mental devotion, or in their capacity to provide an opportunity for the exercise of that devotion: without such exercise the faculty would soon perish of atrophy.

The practice of direct intercession for spiritual or material benefits is of course one of those which it is hardest to justify from the point of view of philosophy: it seems to imply the possibility that God may change the course of the whole world in response to the petition of man. Its justification rests in the fact that Our Lord Himself promises to grant the prayers of those who call upon Him in this manner. Certain modern Christians

incline to the view that such petitions should be confined to prayers for spiritual blessings for ourselves and for others, and would explain the whole process of prayer as one of auto-suggestion (in the case of petitions for ourselves), and apparently of some kind of "thought-transference" (in the case of petitions for others). It is hardly necessary to point out that such a view is entirely alien to the teaching of Jesus: it is ultimately an attempt to reconcile Christianity with a materialist view of the universe, by excepting a limited portion of human life from the purely material sphere. At the same time, it is necessary to recognise that direct intercession has in the past played an excessive part in the conception of prayer current among the majority of Anglicans: it is particularly to be regretted that even Anglicans who follow the Catholic conception of religion in general have not emancipated themselves from the excessive use of "corporate intercessions" as a form of public worship.

Mental Prayer in its proper sense consists of all those actions of the soul by which it endeavours to approach to God without the use of any actual words. Such prayer may take many forms. The commonest type is that in which some incident in the Christian system, whether it be a particular incident in the life of Our Lord or of one of the Saints, a doctrine of the Church or saying of some great Christian teacher, is made the subject of our consideration with a view to its practical application to the circumstances of daily life. From this consideration the soul proceeds to acts of love or desire for closer union with God, hope, contrition, humility, and the like. As the soul advances, the need of formal consideration grows less and the part played by reason grows smaller, the attention being concentrated on the forming of direct acts and aspirations of the will towards God. In the end,

in some of the greatest of the Saints, especially in those who have been called to a life of prayer, rather than of active service of God in works of charity towards others, the power of directing such aspirations towards God has become habitual in such a way as to enable them to attain to a regular state of contemplation or union with God, which is hardly intelligible to the ordinary Christian. For a full account of the various degrees of mental prayer and the methods for following it the reader must consult the works of ascetic theologians; in general however it is safe to say that it must normally begin with the consideration by the intellect of some particular point, which is used for the purpose of exciting the will to a practical carrying-out of the lesson it suggests. Naturally it is as a rule most profitable to base such prayer on the life of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels with a view to the practical imitation of His example. In all cases, however, the purpose of such prayer is to increase the conformity of our will to the will of God.

While however a certain disposition of the soul towards God is a necessary condition for the receiving of grace in any form, this type of prayer which is technically known as mental prayer is not. Its value for the development of the spiritual life cannot be over- estimated, and it is probable that it should be practised far more widely than is commonly the case; it is likely that many who are content with vocal prayer and the use of the Sacraments would find the utmost benefit from it. None the less it is not an absolute necessity, in the same sense that a general disposition of the soul to seek grace from God, which can be produced by vocal prayer, is necessary for the reception of any kind of grace.

## III

## COMMUNION WITH GOD—THE SACRAMENTS

It has been noted above that any action of the soul towards God is immediately met by a reciprocal action on the part of God towards the soul. This belief is a necessary corollary of that personal love of God for each individual soul which forms so large a part of the teaching of Jesus. Now man is not a purely spiritual being. He is in this life united to a material body, and it will be seen later that this material body, although it is in itself corruptible, is none the less the germ of a nature which is eternal. Consequently it is natural that the grace of God should not simply be conveyed to man by imperceptible and purely spiritual means, but that God should provide material means of communion between Himself and the individual soul. Such methods overcome the difficulty which man, as being on one side of his nature a material creature, would experience if his means of communion with God were limited entirely to the spiritual side of his nature, more especially in view of the fact that in the first instance it is the material side of man's nature that predominates; the spiritual element has to be trained by a long and laborious process before it can take its rightful place as the dominant element in human nature. Similarly they make due provision for the fact that the material element in human nature is not evil, but is itself capable of sharing in that benefit of redemption from sin which was won for man by the atoning death of Jesus upon the Cross; in some form or another the material element in the nature of man is capable of being developed into something eternal.

This principle finds its supreme expression in the

belief in the Incarnation. For the belief that Jesus is God Himself, made man, proves that a human nature similar to ours is capable of being the means of expressing the nature of God. A human life and a human death have been in fact the method by which God has revealed Himself to man. But this revelation was not confined to a single place and a single period of time. It has been extended in such a way that every generation and every part of the world can be brought into communion with the incarnate life and the death of Jesus. This extension is the sacramental system of the Catholic Church. In this system we have the divinely appointed means by which man, in virtue of his initial turning to God, receives under certain external forms the gifts of divine grace which he needs if he is to receive the benefit of eternal salvation won for all men by the death of Jesus, i.e., the power to overcome sin and to attain to that state of holiness in which he can accomplish the eternal purpose for which he was created, namely the praising of God or the attainment to union with God by love. (It will be remembered that these are merely two inadequate forms of human speech for describing a state which passes our understanding). The authority for the use of such forms comes from Jesus Himself, either directly in virtue of the fact that He Himself ordained their use, or indirectly in so far as the power to convey particular gifts was bestowed by Him on His first followers, who themselves used particular forms for their conveyance to others, although it cannot be demonstrably shown that Jesus Himself ordained the use of those particular forms. Thus the sacramental system is the divinely appointed means by which grace is conveyed to man. By its right use man has an assurance of salvation ; without it he has none, for it was only in connection with its use that Jesus promised salvation to His disciples. We may indeed have the fullest trust

that those who fail to use it through no fault of their own, and do, even without knowing it, co-operate to the best of their ability with the grace that God gives them, will in the end obtain salvation ; but of this we have no certain divine promise. Those who knowingly and deliberately reject it can only do so at the extreme peril of their souls.

The Sacraments are seven in number. They may conveniently be divided into those which are broadly speaking necessary for the life of the ordinary Christian and those which are necessary only for certain particular purposes. These must now be considered briefly here, though it is manifest that only the most summary treatment is possible.

## IV

## BAPTISM

The first of the Sacraments is baptism, in which the sins of the person baptized are forgiven. It has been seen above that man himself has a natural tendency to prefer evil to good. Whether we regard this tendency as the result of an initial act of sin committed by his first parents, or whether we regard it as due to the fact that he is a creature of the natural order, who must strive to raise himself to the supernatural, is of secondary importance. The fact remains that man has this natural tendency, which in itself puts him into a state of opposition to God. This tendency is known as original sin. As a result of it he does invariably, from the time he develops the most elementary use of reason, commit actions which he knows more or less clearly to be evil ; the extent of this knowledge varies, according to the extent to which he has

acquired the use of reason and the nature of his upbringing. Such actions are described as actual sins, as against the inherent state of original sin in which all men are born. The Sacrament of baptism instituted by Jesus Himself consists of a ceremonial washing in which the person baptized is dipped in water, (in modern practice water is poured on the head of the person baptized), while the person who administers the sacrament pronounces the words : " I baptize thee in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." By this external action is conveyed the forgiveness of all sin of which the person baptized has hitherto been guilty. This in all cases includes original sin ; in the case of those not baptized until they have reached an age at which they are able to understand the distinction between right and wrong it includes also such actual sins as they may have committed. By means of the sacrament the person baptized is thus raised from a natural to a supernatural state. He is not indeed delivered from the natural tendency to prefer evil to good, but he is delivered from a state of being naturally unacceptable to God, and is placed in a state in which it is possible for him to be the recipient of grace. Naturally it remains within his own free will whether he makes use of it or whether he allows the tendency to prefer evil to good to dominate his life. Baptism will not force him to make use of grace, but it puts him in a position in which the grace of God is made available for him in virtue of a direct divine covenant. He is thus said to be regenerated or born again into a new supernatural life ; whether he will develop it, or by preferring to develop only the natural life allow the supernatural to remain dormant and ultimately to perish of inanition, depends on himself. Since the new life, once conveyed, is a permanent gift, baptism can only be conferred once on the Christian.

In practice it is usual to confer this Sacrament on infants who are in a state of original sin, but incapable of actual sin. It might be objected that this practice is inconsistent with the point of view urged in the preceding section that some initial act of submission to God is the necessary condition of receiving grace. The practice of the baptism of infants however rests on the vicarious desire for baptism expressed by the persons who bring the infant to the font and their promise on its behalf to lead a Christian life, a promise which carries with it the duty of providing for the instruction of the child in the Christian religion. The fact that those baptized in infancy may and often do fail to lead a Christian life may be due to neglect of this duty by those who promised on the child's behalf, or to deliberate preference of evil by the person baptized; unhappily such subsequent failures are often to be found in the case of those not baptized until they have reached years of discretion. The justification of the practice of infant baptism lies in the fact that those so baptized have a promise of eternal salvation, since they are delivered from original sin, which is the only barrier between their souls and God; its legitimacy is warranted by the action of Jesus in blessing infants brought to Him and rebuking those who would have kept them from Him; obviously no higher authority can be necessary.

Of the fate of infants who die unbaptized we have no certain knowledge, except in so far as it seems manifestly inconsistent with the belief that God is love to suppose that they suffer eternal punishment for the lack of baptism, when their lack of it is due to no fault of their own. It is a commonly received opinion that they attain to a state of natural happiness, lower than that of the baptized, but none the less a state of positive happiness; but here we are in the region of speculation. It may be

added that the Church attaches such importance to the deliverance from sin which this sacrament conveys, and the consequent claim which it gives to the covenanted promise of eternal salvation, that in the case of an emergency, for instance in the case of a dying infant, any baptized person can administer it.

## V

## THE EUCHARIST

The second sacrament in respect of the life of the Christian is the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. (It is of course only second to baptism in so far as it can, like the rest of the Sacraments, only be conferred on those who have by baptism been made Christians, and in so far as it is only available for those who have reached the age of reason). The institution of this Sacrament took place at the last meal eaten by Jesus with His disciples before His crucifixion. At this meal He "took bread and blessed, and brake it and gave to them and said, Take, eat; this is My body. And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them; and they all drank of it. And He said unto them, This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many." This is the account of the institution of the Holy Sacrament given in St. Mark's Gospel; the narratives recording the incident vary slightly, as is natural in view of the fact that the incident they record was associated, by the time that the narratives were written, with the principal feature of Christian worship. Hence we are dealing with narratives which have already passed into a very wide use as a fixed part of Christian worship, and have thus

crystallised into slightly different forms as the result of oral transmission, and cannot now be changed by the writers of the Gospels, for the sake of harmony. The point is of importance in view of the fantastic theories which have sometimes been built on the minor variations in the account of the institution of the Eucharist preserved in the New Testament. In particular the fact that the account in St. Mark's Gospel makes no mention of any command on the part of Jesus to continue the use of the rite has been taken to indicate that in fact He had no intention that it should be continued, and that the Eucharist as a Christian institution is derived not from Jesus but from the later introduction into the Church of a rite modelled on the story of the Last Supper. Such theories may be dismissed as fantastic; the Eucharist as a Christian institution dates back to the period when Christianity regarded itself as simply a sect of Judaism, in which the introduction of the Eucharist as a ritual meal would have been unthinkable, unless it had been due to the command of Jesus Himself. Whether the command to continue the scene of the Last Supper was originally given in the words in which St. Paul records it in his first letter to the Corinthians or in some other form of words is obviously a secondary point.

It is a matter of common knowledge that the exact meaning of the words of Jesus at the Last Supper, have furnished the ground for endless controversies. As a matter of history the Church has from the first tended in one direction. It has always been the view that the repetition of the words uttered by Jesus on that occasion over the elements of bread and wine by a duly authorised minister of the Church produced in them a change by which they cease to be common bread and wine and become instead the Body and Blood of Jesus which were offered for the salvation of man upon the Cross. (It has

sometimes been held that a specific prayer for the accomplishment of this change must be added to the original words of Jesus). This change does not affect their external properties ; it is a change which, leaving their qualities exactly as they were, in so far as they are knowable to the ordinary means of human perception, yet transforms their essential nature from that of bread and wine into that of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Such a change naturally leaves unaffected not only those properties which are the object of the ordinary knowledge of the senses, but also those which are the object of the most elaborate scientific analysis : the change belongs not to the natural but to the supernatural plane. All the perceptible or thinkable qualities of bread remain exactly as they were before : but the reality which is present on the altar after the " words of consecration," (i.e., the words spoken by Jesus at the Last Supper and now repeated by Him through the agency of His minister), is no longer bread but the Body of Jesus Himself. He is present, as He was present to His disciples in His incarnate life, giving Himself under the forms of Bread and Wine to be the food that sustains the spiritual life of His faithful people.

This belief, in its explicit form, was only reached by the Church after the lapse of some centuries. The delay in its formulation was mainly due to the fact that no particular controversy arose on the question of the Eucharistic presence of Jesus during earlier periods of Christian development. Here, as in the case of other doctrines, the experience of Christian devotion saw in the Eucharist the appointed means by which the Lord vouchsafed to give Himself to His children as the regular means for the support of that new life which they had received at Baptism. That food could only be regarded as His Body and Blood in view of the words uttered by

Him at the Last Supper, the consecrated elements being the means by which He communicated His divine life to later generations, just as His bodily presence was the means by which He communicated it to His first followers. Thus to St. Paul the partaking of the Eucharist was a partaking of, or a communion with, the Body and Blood of Christ; to receive it unworthily was to be guilty of a deadly outrage against His person. The development of Catholic doctrine followed the natural meaning of the words of Jesus at the Last Supper, which in their obvious sense, when divested of the various conceptions which subsequent ages of controversy have endeavoured to read into them, imply an identity of the consecrated elements with His Body and Blood. Now ordinary bread and wine are manifestly not the Body and Blood of Jesus; they are simply bread and wine. Hence it is necessary to suppose that some change has taken place in the Eucharistic elements in virtue of which this identification is possible. That change is certainly not on the natural plane, on which they remain unaltered; it follows necessarily that the change is in the supernatural and supersensible order. Hence the constant tendency of Christian devotion was to see in the Eucharistic elements a means by which Jesus presents Himself to the Christian, enabling him by faith to enjoy that personal fellowship with Him, which it was the privilege of His first disciples to enjoy in Galilee and Jerusalem, and to receive the benefits of the forgiveness won by His death on the Cross and the new life won by His Resurrection. The doctrinal formulation of a later age was merely the formal statement of what had always been implied in the devotional attitude to the Eucharist of every earlier generation of Christians.

It may be added that this belief is in harmony with the general tenour of Christian doctrine. The whole

natural order is from the Christian point of view a self-revelation of God, true so far as it goes, yet not complete, nor yet so clear that by it alone we can discover the true nature of God. It needs a direct divine revelation to make it possible for man to find God, although in itself creation points towards Him. Similarly all that is true in the discoveries of human wisdom proceeds from a divine light vouchsafed to the human soul, and is thus the result of a divine revelation, but that revelation is only partial until it finds its completion and confirmation in the person of Jesus. Thus the whole natural order is a partial revelation of God; but Jesus Himself is the full and perfect revelation of God, vouchsafed indeed in terms of the natural order, yet, since He Himself is God, emanating from a higher than the natural order. From this point of view it is consonant with the general methods of the divine operation that objects of the natural order should be employed as the means by which the divine nature, revealed in the humanity of Jesus, should be rendered accessible to all mankind. The attempt to find a purely symbolic interpretation of the Eucharist by regarding it as a means by which the faithful are able to enter into spiritual communion with Jesus in virtue of their faith, not in virtue of His actual presence under the outward forms of bread and wine, is in effect inconsistent with the whole method of the Incarnation, since it implies that the supreme means vouchsafed to man for entering into communion with God depends for its efficacy on the efforts of man himself, not on a divine gift, which does indeed need the co-operation of man to render it effective, yet depends for its efficacy on the divine gift, not on the human action. Further it demands from the believer a power to distinguish between the actual elements and the divine gift which they symbolize, which is bound either to be ignored by the uneducated Christian, (who

will thus receive the Holy Sacrament in a " superstitious " belief that it is the Body and Blood of Christ when in fact it is not), or to remain something so unintelligible to him that he will abandon the practice of receiving the Sacrament as something reserved for those more learned than himself. The belief that the Eucharist is to be regarded as simply a memorial feast of bread and wine to commemorate the death of Jesus scarcely needs to be seriously considered, since it fails so manifestly to give any meaning to the words of Jesus, " This is my body." The objection that common things such as bread and wine, or so material a process as eating are unworthy of being used as the supreme method by which God should bestow Himself upon man, is of course from the point of view of an entire unbeliever a perfectly valid one : it is very difficult to believe that the Creator of the universe should give Himself to man in such a form. But it is equally remarkable that he should take upon Himself the form of a crucified Jew. On this point it is only necessary to remember that Jesus proclaimed that the divine method was to " hide these things from the wise and prudent and to reveal them unto babes." An objection to the Catholic conception of the Eucharist on these grounds is in fact a fundamental objection to Christianity, and must stand or fall with the arguments advanced in Part I, Chapter V.

There is, however, a further aspect of this Sacrament to be considered here. As the life of Jesus was not merely an act of revelation by which God showed His true nature to man, but also, particularly in the death with which it closed, a sacrifice by which God offered Himself to be an atonement for the sins of mankind, whose nature He had taken upon Himself for the purpose, so the Eucharist is an act of sacrifice by which the one Sacrifice of Calvary is pleaded for the benefit of individual Chris-

tians. This belief again was inherent in Christian devotion long before it received any definite formulation. It originated in the fact that so soon as the Church was separated from the old system of Judaism, the Eucharist naturally took the place of the sacrificial worship of the Temple as the centre of Christian life. The language of Jesus at the Last Supper implied that the new rite was the foundation of a new dispensation, just as the original Passover, which was being commemorated by Jesus and His disciples at the Last Supper, was the foundation of the old covenant between God and the Jewish people. As that covenant found its expression in a sacrificial system, so it was natural to find in the new an expression of the universal human need for some oblation which might enable man to come with confidence before the throne of God. Since the Body and Blood of Jesus offered on Calvary were also present under the Eucharistic forms, it was natural to regard them as being now, what they were then, the oblation offered for the sins of all mankind. There is indeed a certain difficulty here, since it was also firmly believed that the sacrifice of Calvary was the one perfect atonement for the sins of all mankind ; it is difficult to believe that the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice can in any sense be a real sacrifice, unless it can be regarded as in some way adding to the value of the sacrifice offered by Jesus on the Cross. Yet the minds of Christians felt an imperative need for a real sacrifice with which the individual believer may venture in spite of his unworthiness to approach the divine majesty. The solution of this quite genuine difficulty is two-fold. In the first place, to adopt a human analogy we may regard the merits of the death of Jesus as an inexhaustible reservoir of merit, which potentially can make atonement for the sins of all mankind. Yet by themselves they do not profit the individual, except in so far as he

makes them his own. Obviously Christianity in any form postulates the belief that some action on the part of the individual is necessary, if the merits of the death of Jesus on the Cross are to be of any avail for his particular needs ; any other view involves the belief that all men are inevitably saved, whether they desire it or not. From this point of view any action by which man approaches God is, so far as it goes, a means by which he appropriates to himself the merits of the Cross, in virtue of which alone his action can have any value. Of all such actions the greatest is the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice, in which we directly offer the one oblation of Calvary for our particular needs, the sacrifice being thus the divinely appointed channel by which the merits of the "inexhaustible reservoir" are applied to our own individual needs.

There is however another point of view, from which it is perhaps possible to transcend the undoubted difficulty of harmonizing the demand of Christian experience for a real sacrifice with its insistence on the complete efficacy of the death of Jesus on the Cross as the perfect sacrifice of atonement for all human sin. The Christian revelation is the revelation of God Himself in terms of space and time ; yet God Himself is not bound by space and time, which are His creatures. From the human point of view the atonement can only be known as an event in which God Himself suffered the death of the Cross. Thus we are bound to think of a period in time before the atonement had taken place, and to distinguish the activity of Jesus in His incarnate life from His mode of being as God the Son before the Incarnation, and again to distinguish His heavenly being as both God and man after His ascension into heaven from His mode of being both before and during His incarnate life. Yet reflection shows that while these distinctions are valid in so far

as they are necessary for us to be able to understand the Incarnation at all, yet, as stated, they cannot apply exactly to the nature of God, which is timeless. From the human point of view the Incarnation and Atonement are incidents in history ; yet they cannot be incidents in the history of God, to Whom every moment of time is equally present, just as is every point of space. From the divine point of view the fact of the Atonement is the love of God for man, which is so deep that He was willing to become man and die on the Cross for our salvation. That He did so is a fact of history ; yet none the less it is also an eternal fact which has an existence apart from the order of time. Thus self-sacrificing and atoning love is an element in the eternal nature of God, quite apart from the realisation of that love in the course of history in the death of Jesus as the atonement for the sins of man on Calvary. We have here a mystery which surpasses human understanding, but is none the less rendered necessary by the demand of human thought that the nature of God should be above change.

This conception meets us in the pages of scripture. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews describes Jesus as our High Priest who in virtue of the sacrifice of Calvary pleads eternally for us in heaven. Such a conception is necessary, yet not finally adequate, since it implies a change in the nature of the divine being after the Incarnation. The writer of the Apocalypse writes with yet greater penetration of Jesus as " the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world." Here we have a clear grasp of the timeless nature of the sacrifice of Calvary as something inherent in the nature of God apart from its manifestation in the temporal order ; we have seen above that this conception is necessary to explain the possibility of man receiving grace before the Incarnation. If this be applied to the Eucharist, we find a solution of the difficulty

noticed above. The true character of the atonement is its eternal character as an element in the divine nature. The crucifixion is its manifestation as a fact of human history; it could only be manifested in this way within the temporal order of human life. On the other hand the sacrifice of the Eucharist is its local and temporal manifestation to individual Christians in every part of time and space. The offering of Calvary could necessarily be offered only at one time and at one place; but the atonement as an eternal fact is necessary to the whole of mankind at every moment of life. In the Eucharist we have then the eternal sacrifice in a form in which it can be pleaded by all men at all times; for in it the Son offers to the Father that sacrifice which it is His eternal nature to present for the sins of mankind. Thus Calvary and the Eucharist are different modes of presenting in the world the one eternal fact; the former is its supreme manifestation in the temporal order, the latter its local and partial manifestation for the particular needs of individual Christians. The ultimate fact is beyond either, for it is an element in the eternal nature of God. We can rightly regard Calvary as the offering of the one Sacrifice, and the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice as its local application; but our conception, though true so far as it goes falls short of the eternal truth, which is ultimately beyond our understanding.

It is obvious that in the case of this Sacrament the grace provided is nothing less than the divine life of Jesus as God made man, given to be the food of our souls. Since He is the actual reality present under the outward forms of bread and wine, the grace He gives is in itself unlimited. On the other hand the capacity of the soul to receive grace from Him is not unlimited; it is limited both by sin and by lack of spiritual development. Those who presume to receive Him when they are in a state of grievous

sin receive, as St. Paul has pointed out, not grace but condemnation; those who receive Him with a very small degree of devotion will normally receive but a small measure of grace; it is obvious indeed that to receive Him with a complete lack of devotion may involve a degree of sin which can only bring with it guilt and condemnation. Naturally "devotion" here is not to be interpreted as any mere sense of spiritual enthusiasm; what is needed is the intention of receiving Jesus for the benefit of the soul with humility and repentance; though such an intention will of course be developed and deepened as the soul advances in Christian holiness into a higher degree of spiritual union with God, which will increase the capacity of the soul to assimilate the grace of the Sacrament.

The celebration of the Christian mysteries is reserved to those who have been admitted to the Christian priesthood. The nature of this office will be discussed below.

NOTE.—The belief in the nature of the Blessed Sacrament described above inevitably rendered it from the first the centre of all Christian worship. The Eucharistic service, commonly known as the Mass is in its origin a combination of certain elements of the old worship of the Jewish synagogue with the specifically Christian worship of the Eucharist; it must be remembered that the Eucharist is the only act of worship for the regular daily life of the Christian which owes its origin to Jesus Himself. From the time when Christianity spread beyond the city of Jerusalem the Mass has formed the centre of the weekly religious life of the Christian; for many years it was regarded as inevitable that those present at the Mass on Sunday should also receive Holy Communion. The decline of this practice was due to the lower standard of Christian devotion which became prevalent after the triumph of the Church in the reign of Constantine. The low moral standard of many Christians led to their abstention from communion, for which they felt themselves unfit, except at one or two great festivals. The tendency since the Reformation has been to insist on the desirability of frequent communion. At the same time the very ancient rule that those who receive Holy Communion should be fasting (a rule based on a just perception of the necessity of inculcating the disposition

of internal reverence by rules of external observance), has been maintained, in spite of the change of social custom as a result of which it is now usual to eat the first meal of the day at a comparatively early hour. The result of this development has been that it is now common for Catholics to receive Holy Communion at a "Low Mass," i.e., a celebration of the Eucharistic service at which the accessories of ceremonial are less elaborate, and music and singing are omitted. This type of service is also that normally provided on weekdays, when the faithful have little time to spare from the claims of their work. The more elaborate service of "High Mass" (or a Mass with singing and music though without the full ceremonial of High Mass) remains as a form of worship for Sundays and great festivals: on Sundays it is usually postponed until a comparatively late hour, in order to enable the faithful to fulfil the weekly obligation of hearing Mass on Sunday. At such services there are few communicants except the Priest who is actually celebrating, and usually none, the reason being the change in social manners noted above; those of the faithful who desire to receive Holy Communion have done so at a Low Mass at an earlier hour. This is, however, merely a matter of practical convenience; there is no reason why High Mass should not be celebrated at an early hour with a large number of communicants, as often happens on festivals which are not public holidays, when the faithful are only able to be present early in the morning. These are matters in which the parish Priest decides for himself; and naturally his decision is, or should be based on the convenience of his flock.

A further development which must be noted here is the practice of reserving the Consecrated Elements (in practice only under the form of Bread), in order to give Holy Communion to those who for one reason or another are unable to receive it during the course of the Mass. Originally the practice was due to the necessity of providing the Sacrament for the sick, who were unable to be present at Mass on Sunday; naturally other causes besides sickness might occasionally arise, such as imprisonment or the inability of Christians of servile status to be absent from the houses of heathen masters.

The practice of sending the Holy Sacrament out of the Church for such objects dates back to the middle of the second century A. D. when Justin Martyr treats it as an established practice, not as an innovation.

The practice of "Reservation" is more than ever necessary in modern times, when the pressure of work makes it very difficult for the ordinary Christian to receive Holy Communion on weekdays, if it is only possible for him to do so during Mass; for although it may be possible to find an hour for the daily Mass which will suit the bulk

of the laity, it is certain to be unsuitable for many. This difficulty is very urgent in large industrial parishes but it is said to apply even more strongly to rural areas.

Since Catholics believe that the Consecrated Elements are in fact the bodily presence of Jesus Himself, it is inevitable that they should be reserved with every circumstance of outward dignity, which may serve to express and at the same time to inculcate the devotion which the Church owes to her Lord. So present among men in this manner, He will be the principal though by no means the only object of the private devotions of those who enter a church to pray, and they will be assisted in their prayers by such external marks of devotion as have been shown to be most suitable to provide such assistance. Services will be provided in which the congregation can offer to Jesus that homage which is His due; and by fostering devotion to Jesus in the Holy Sacrament they will inevitably tend to increase the desire of the Christian to receive Him more frequently and devoutly in Communion. In all such acts of worship the homage which the faithful offer will be rewarded by the grace which flows from the actual presence of Jesus among them. Naturally this measure of grace is incomparably less than that which they will receive in Holy Communion. Yet at the same time the increased devotion to Jesus in the Holy Sacrament, which such acts of worship produce, will increase their capacity to assimilate the grace which He gives them when they actually receive Him in Communion.

## VI

## THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

In no point did the teaching of Jesus arouse so much hostility among the Jews of His time as in its claim to exercise the divine prerogative of the forgiveness of sin. This claim was openly made on several occasions; and on several occasions Jesus expressed His intention of conferring the authority which He claimed to exercise in the matter on His disciples. In the first period of Christian development which preceded the public recognition of Christianity by the Roman Empire this prerogative

was exercised mainly in two ways. The first was in the conferring of baptism. Those baptised were normally adults, and in receiving baptism they received forgiveness for the sins of their past lives as heathen ; in some cases their baptism was preceded by a public confession of their sins, but it is probable that this was only in cases where the past life of the person baptized had been one of notorious iniquity.

The second was in the forgiveness of sins committed after baptism. The early missionary activity of St. Paul was marked by a peculiar reliance on the power of a sudden conversion to change the whole moral outlook of the convert, who was admitted to baptism with little or no preliminary testing or instruction ; and the result was often disastrous. Subsequent generations found by experience that it was unsafe to assume that a convert had so far broken with the habits of his heathen life as to be fit for admission to the full privileges of the Church, until he had been tested by a long period of instruction and probation. As a result of this probation, coupled with the fact that the would-be convert had also to face the prospect of persecution at the hands of the Imperial authorities, if he were known to be a Christian, the general moral level of professing Christians at this time was so high that serious lapses into sin could be regarded as something monstrous and unnatural. Hence such sins as relapsing into idolatry or open and notorious violations of the moral law of the Ten Commandments were regarded as outrages against the majesty of God, so grievous that they could only be expiated by long periods of public penance imposed after a public confession of guilt. In the case of certain sins reconciliation was only granted at the moment of death.

With the peace of the Church the position was changed. Considerations of worldly prudence favoured the pro-

fession of Christianity. The result was a rapid accession of converts educated as heathen, with very little desire to break with the sins of the past. Moreover generation after generation of Christians grew up as time went on, who had never been anything but Christians, or envisaged the possibility of any other religion. The result was a serious decline in the average moral level of the Christian society. It remained infinitely superior to the old heathen level, but it was very much lower than it had been when Christianity was a perilous profession, which none would embrace unless he was inspired by the most ardent faith. In such a position the old system of discipline, which regarded open sins on the part of Christians as monstrous and almost inexplicable enormities, could nolonger be maintained. To meet the difficulty a new system grew up for dispensing that power to forgive sins which Jesus had bestowed on His disciples. By this system the practice of public confession was changed to one of private confession to an authorised person ; while for the performance of a lengthy public penance was substituted the private performance of such works of piety as the person through whom forgiveness was conveyed might regard as suitable. The result was obviously a far milder system of dealing with serious sins, which could now be forgiven in return for a private confession and a comparatively slight penance, instead of a public confession and a lengthy period of discipline and separation from communion. It is easy to argue that by thus modifying her demands the Church was putting a premium on sin. In fact however it is very difficult to see any other course that was open to her. To have retained her older practice would have involved the exclusion of all but a minority of mankind from her membership, and would also have committed her to the entirely unchristian view that sin consists solely of open and notorious breaches of the moral law. There has always

been a dangerous tendency for the Church to fall into this error, and to confine her attention to such sins, while ignoring the less obvious but equally dangerous sins such as pride and uncharitableness, which were in point of fact condemned by Jesus more strongly than actions which the world in general regards as grave moral offences.

The system of moral discipline thus introduced developed during the centuries which followed the peace of the Church into the system now generally current, by which the normal means for the forgiveness of sins committed after baptism is confession to a priest, who imposes the performance of some act of piety as a satisfaction for the injury done to God by the sins confessed, (and also, in cases where such sins have involved a serious injury to a neighbour, which it is in the power of the sinner to repair, the making of suitable reparation ; normally this can only arise in certain cases of theft or slander). In virtue of the confession of sin and the performance of the penance imposed the priest pronounces the absolution of the " penitent," as the Christian who comes to seek for the forgiveness of his sins is called, in virtue of the penitence or sorrow for sin which is implied in his coming to seek forgiveness. It is of course only in virtue of the penitence which leads him to seek forgiveness that any forgiveness is possible ; a sinner who confessed his sins without any degree of sorrow for them whatsoever would be incapable of forgiveness ; he would not receive pardon even though the priest prononuced absolution over him, while the priest would be bound if he were really certain that the penitent had no such sorrow for his sins, to refuse to pronounce absolution. (Naturally it very rarely happens that any such certainty is possible). The pronouncement of absolution is, apart from this possibility, a complete forgiveness of sin, the priest cating not in his own person, in respect of which he has

obviously no right to exercise the Divine prerogative of forgiving sin, but in the person of Jesus, Whose authority in this matter he received at his ordination. This authority is of course that which Jesus gave to His disciples and they handed down to their successors. (This point will be more fully discussed below). It may be observed that at one period it was customary for the hearing of confessions to be undertaken not by priests but by persons consecrated to the religious life as monks or hermits, the presumption being that they had the power of forgiveness in virtue of their peculiar holiness. It is obvious that the Church was wise in attaching the power not to personal holiness but to the office of the priesthood, since it is impossible to be certain that a person who apparently has attained to the highest degree of holiness is not in fact merely a peculiarly successful hypocrite ; we may have a moral certainty on the point, but never an absolute certainty. Now if the power to forgive sins depended on actual holiness, the sinner could have no certainty that his sins were forgiven, since it would always be possible that the person to whom he had made confession was in fact not qualified by his personal character to convey forgiveness.

It has been observed that the Priest hears confessions and conveys forgiveness not in his own person but in that of Our Lord Jesus Christ. On this fact rests the secrecy which every priest is bound to observe as to matters which he has learnt in the hearing of confessions. This secrecy is absolute, there being no circumstances which justify a Priest in revealing to others matters which he has learnt in this way. He may not even refer to such matters in private conversations with the penitent outside the confessional, unless the penitent should express a desire to discuss them ; naturally he may not in any way change his general attitude and behaviour towards

the penitent on the ground of anything he has learnt in this way. Nor may he use his authority for his own personal advantage, or in any way which might injure the temporal position of the penitent, except in so far as he may order the restitution of ill-gotten gains, where such restitution can be made without involving further loss to the penitent.

In practice the use of the Sacrament of penance is enjoined on the faithful once a year, namely at the festival of Easter, when all Christians are bound also to receive Holy Communion in honour of the Resurrection of Jesus. In itself it is only essential as a means of obtaining forgiveness of sins of the kind described as "mortal," as opposed to those known as "venial." The authority for distinguishing between sins of such gravity that they involve the death of the soul, ("mortal" sins) and those which are of a lesser gravity ("venial" sins) can be traced to the Scriptures. None the less it presents a considerable difficulty. A mortal sin should properly be one which destroys the soul by cutting it off from the grace of God, until such time as it is forgiven. This indeed appears to be the sense of the scriptural writers, who describe certain sins as being "sins unto death," and of such a final degree of iniquity that it is not even possible for others to pray for those who commit them. Christianity however in its later development has never accepted this belief which seems to set a limit to the infinite possibility of the divine mercy, and has never admitted that any sin can be so deadly as to be incapable of forgiveness. On the other hand, if mortal sins are such as to cut a soul off from divine grace, it is, from the theological point of view, impossible to see how they can be forgiven. For sin cannot be forgiven without repentance on the part of the sinner; and it is impossible to see how the sinner can repent without the assistance of the grace of God.

A sin which really cut the soul off completely from grace would in fact render it incapable of repentance and therefore entirely incapable of forgiveness.

A further difficulty has been raised from an opposite point of view. Sin is in its essence deliberate rebellion against the will of God ; an action is only sinful in so far as the sinner knows that it is contrary to the divine will, at least to the extent of knowing that it is contrary to some general law of right and wrong, although he may not be explicitly conscious that the ultimate basis of the distinction between right and wrong is the will of God. It has therefore been argued that since any sin involves an act of rebellion against the will of God, it is impossible to distinguish between degrees of sin ; for any act of rebellion against the will of God must be of the gravest sinfulness. Such an objection, however, seems to ignore the plain facts of human experience. We cannot really believe that all sins are equally wicked—for instance that a deliberate and cold-blooded murder is not worse than a slightly uncharitable speech. It is true that the general worldly standard which ignores all sins entirely except in so far as they result in open and scandalous violations of the moral law is profoundly unchristian ; but at the same time it is not really possible to believe that all sins as such are equally grievous.

While, however, there is considerable difficulty in the distinction between mortal and venial sins as a matter of theological theory, there is no doubt of its value as a general rule of practice, which enables the priest to decide which sins are more immediately fraught with danger to the salvation of the soul in virtue of their more grievous character. It should be noted that the distinction is not one which will guide us to the attainment of Christian perfection ; the idea that venial sins are unimportant, and can be acquiesced in with complacency so long as mortal

sins are avoided, is entirely foreign to Catholic theology. On the other hand it is primarily as a means of obtaining forgiveness for mortal sins that the Sacrament of penance is useful. Hence it is necessary for those who have fallen into mortal sin to receive sacramental absolution before receiving Holy Communion, in order that their souls may be in a fit state to receive their Lord; while those who are exposed to temptations as a result of which they frequently fall into mortal sin are recommended to make frequent use of both sacraments, in order to obtain the grace which they need to resist their own particular temptations. In this respect experience proves the efficacy of the generally recommended practice as a means of overcoming temptation. In the case of those whose sins are normally of the kind regarded as venial there is not the same necessity for frequent confession, though it has been found by many to be of the utmost assistance as a means of overcoming temptation and growing in holiness. This however is a matter of opinion, and those who do not find that frequent use of the Sacrament of penance assists their spiritual life are under no obligation to practise it. There is indeed a danger that those who are content with rare confessions may grow to acquiesce in habits of venial sin which may in the long run develop into mortal sins of the most dangerous, because the least obvious kind, as for example habitual uncharitableness towards others or spiritual pride; but such dangers cannot be entirely avoided even with a regular and frequent practice of confession. They can only be avoided by a continual and serious struggle to attain to Christian holiness, and particularly by a regular use of mental prayer and frequent communion. Frequent confession is a valuable assistance in such a struggle in the majority of cases; but it cannot be said to be absolutely necessary. The primary purpose of the sacrament

is the forgiveness of mortal sin ; those who do not find it also a means for increasing in grace can content themselves with using it comparatively rarely, though by Catholic rules they are bound to make use of it at least annually.

It may be noted that in the case of this sacrament the external element consists in the action of the sinner in confessing his sins and expressing his sorrow for them, and the pronouncement of the words of absolution by the priest ; it has been seen that the internal disposition needed is that of sorrow for sins actually committed, accompanied, as genuine sorrow for sin must obviously be, with an intention of avoiding sin in the future. This intention will often be a very weak one, particularly at the outset of the Christian life, but it is in itself an element of true repentance.

## VII

## CONFIRMATION

On the day of Pentecost the first disciples of Jesus received the gift of the Holy Ghost. This gift was of a two-fold kind. In the first instance it was a gift of strength and guidance to enable them to undertake the task of converting the world ; in the second it was the formal bestowal of the powers which Jesus had promised them for the establishment and government of his kingdom on earth. How far this distinction was explicitly present to the minds of the disciples may perhaps be doubted ; but it represents the double way in which they communicated the gift they had received to their converts. We find that in fact they believed themselves to have the

power to convey to others the gift of the Holy Ghost, either for the general purpose of giving strength and guidance to all converts, or for the specific purpose of conveying to selected Christians the powers and duties that they had themselves received for the government of the Church, the teaching of its doctrines and the conduct of its worship. The latter group of powers we shall consider in dealing with the Sacrament of Holy Order. The former gift is one which all Christians can receive. The essence of the Sacrament is the bestowal of the Holy Ghost to strengthen the Christian in his struggle for the overcoming of temptation and the attainment of Christian holiness. The Sacrament can like baptism only be conferred once on the Christian, since the divine gift once bestowed is permanent. It may be allowed to become dormant, if the recipient falls into a life of sin; but in such cases the divine power must be revived by repentance and amendment of life, not by a fresh bestowal of the Divine gift. In this respect the practice and teaching of the Church rest entirely upon those of the first generation of Christians as recorded in Holy Scripture, where the initial gift of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost was clearly regarded as something unique, and distinct from subsequent outpourings (in the form of speaking with tongues or the power to work miracles) afterwards vouchsafed to the persons actually present at Pentecost. In the same way a gift of the Holy Ghost was expected to accompany the imposition of the hands of the Apostles immediately after the baptism of the convert, and this initial gift was again regarded as distinct from subsequent outpourings of the Holy Ghost on the same person. Since the power to confer the Holy Ghost was from the first reserved to the Apostles, this Sacrament is normally conferred by a Bishop, who is regarded as the successor to the full measure of Apostolic authority in

this matter, not, as is the case with priests, to certain specific portions of it conveyed to him at ordination.

It may be added that by the general practice of Western Christendom this sacrament is bestowed upon those who have attained to the age of reason and is conveniently joined to a ratification by the person confirmed of the promises made for him by his sponsors at Baptism. It is clear that this distinction between the two sacraments is convenient in view of the general practice of infant baptism; but in view of the practice of the Church at certain periods and in certain places of confirming infants immediately after baptism it cannot be said to be necessary. The actual method of conferring the Sacrament has varied widely at different times, and there is no single external action which can be said to be essential to it beyond the utterance of prayers by the Bishop, (or his authorised deputy) of a character suitable to indicate the nature of the gift bestowed. In the English Church the conferring of this Sacrament normally precedes admission to Holy Communion for the first time. The practice is open to somewhat serious objection, since it tends in some cases to be regarded as more important than the first communion, and to be the climax of the Christian life. This is perhaps mainly due to the tendency to defer both confirmation and first communion to an inconveniently late age, when the person confirmed has already formed time to develop a number of sinful habits, without gaining from the gift of the Holy Ghost in Confirmation and the practice of regular communion and confession grace to resist the growth of such habits. The same objection would not be felt if it were recognised that confirmation should usually be administered before the age of ten.

## VIII

## HOLY UNCTION

Holy Unction is a sacrament based on the command of Our Lord to His disciples to heal the sick, a command which they fulfilled by anointing them with oil and laying their hands on them. The external ceremonies were accompanied with prayer. It would appear that the practice of anointing was definitely regarded as a sacramental means of healing, not as a natural one, i.e., that cures produced in this way were regarded as due not to any medicinal value which the use of oil might possess, but to the power of God exercised in answer to the use of the appointed sacramental means and the prayers of the faithful. For although anointing as a means of healing certain diseases was fairly common, yet there is no suggestion that its use should be restricted to cases where it might conceivably be of any value ; while cures produced in this way are ascribed to the prayers of the faithful, not to the medicinal properties of the oil. Similarly in the Epistle of St. James it is anticipated that the anointing of the sick will result not merely in their restoration to health, but also in the forgiveness of their sins.

Thus from the first the object of the rite was to secure certain spiritual benefits, namely the forgiveness of sins, and also the material benefit of healing of sickness, if it should be the will of God to grant it. The progress of medical science has naturally lessened the emphasis laid on the latter aspect ; for it is no part of the Christian Faith to suppose that God will vouchsafe miraculous cures to replace the normal means for the healing of sickness, any more than it is part of the Christian religion to suppose that the faithful should abstain from earning

their living by ordinary means and trust that God will feed them. Thus in modern practice the use of the sacrament is confined to cases of sickness where there is a strong possibility that the patient, in spite of all medical assistance, will not recover. Its object is primarily to confirm and strengthen that divine forgiveness of sin which the patient has already won by his confession and absolution; for since he needs at the moment when death is imminent the fullest possible assurance of forgiveness, it is only natural and fitting that he should be provided with a sacrament for conveying that assurance. At the same time it is recognised that the sacrament may be and sometimes is a means for conveying a divine gift of healing to those who seemed at any rate to be beyond all hope of recovery; though naturally it is impossible to prove that the recovery was definitely due to the use of the sacrament.

## IX

## HOLY MATRIMONY

It is obviously only fitting that a fact of such far-reaching importance in human life as the union of a man and a woman in marriage should come under the special provision of the Christian religion. It is hardly necessary to point out the emphasis laid by Judaism on the virtue of sexual purity, an emphasis which Jesus increased in His personal teaching. The Christian Church indeed in accordance with His teaching has always held that the highest ideal is that of absolute virginity, but that only some Christians have a special vocation to this state. For most Christians the natural and proper

condition is the married state; and the entrance upon this state is surrounded with the sacramental sanctions of the Church. There is indeed no definite external form for conveying the sanction and blessing of the Church to those entering upon the married life. The external element here is provided by the appearance of the two persons contracting holy matrimony before the priest as representing the whole body of Christian people and solemnly undertaking the obligations of Christian marriage, while receiving the divine blessing upon their agreement.

In view of the controversies on the subject of marriage now current, it is well to point out that Christian marriage can only be dissolved by the death of one of the partners to it. Hence, while the Church in certain cases permits of the separation of married persons, it does not permit either of them to marry again so long as the other partner is alive. The attitude of the Church in this matter has often been criticised. In itself this criticism is unjust; for the Church does not regard it as being in any way impossible for the innocent partner to a marriage which has ended in disaster to live for the future in the single state in which many Christians are called to live their whole lives. On the other hand in the present state of English law and English society there is an undeniable difficulty. Owing to the position of the English Church as the established Church of the country, it is the normal social convention for marriages to be solemnized in Church by a rite which presupposes that both partners accept the Christian view of marriage, whereas in fact in a large number of cases they do not. The result is that it is very difficult for the Church to refuse her sanction to a marriage, in which one or possibly both parties have no intention of observing the terms of the agreement into which they enter; in fact the form which the Church regards as

the solemnization of a sacrament is regarded by many of those married by it as a mere formality to which no meaning attaches. At the same time the influence of the Church in the past has been strong enough to limit very largely the power of obtaining a divorce which will allow the persons divorced to marry others; such divorces can only be obtained by an expensive legal process. The result is that in practice only the rich can obtain a divorce, which allows of re-marriage; the poor have in general to be content with a judicial separation, which does not. This is an obvious injustice. At the same time the Church not unnaturally objects to any extension of the facilities for obtaining divorce which would in fact tend to increase the number of marriages solemnized by her in which the two partners have no intention of observing the pledges solemnly made by them. Further the extension of such facilities would in large industrial areas render it difficult for the parish clergy to be certain that they were not in many cases solemnizing marriages between persons, who having previously been married to and divorced from persons still living are incapable of receiving the sacrament of matrimony. On the other hand while the Church has an undoubted right to legislate as to the conditions in which her members are allowed to marry, and the conditions under which the bond of matrimony may be dissolved, it is hard to justify her claim to legislate for these who do not accept her authority. This is obvious; but at the same time it is under the present conditions difficult, if not impossible, for her in practice to confine the solemnization of marriages in Church to those who are genuinely Christians.

A further complication is introduced by the fact that the Christian is also a citizen, and has in his capacity as a citizen to consider the question of the extent to which an extension of the facilities for obtaining divorce would

be of benefit to the nation. Many Christians in fact believe that on social apart from religious grounds the present facilities are excessive and would be glad to see them limited. From this point of view the fact that the law at the moment discriminates in favour of the rich as against the poor is no argument in favour of extending existing facilities; it is only an argument in favour of the abolition of the existing facilities. At the same time such an attitude, which is in itself perfectly logical, is somewhat impracticable, since in point of fact there is no probability that the existing facilities will ever be restricted; and the opposition of Christians to the extension of the divorce laws tends in fact to become an attempt to retain in practice an unjust distinction in favour of the rich. Similarly their opposition to the extension of the grounds on which divorce may be given tends to become an attempt to impose the Christian standpoint in one particular on those who reject it in everything else.

The only solution for the difficulty would appear to be the recognition of the right of the Church to refuse her sanction to all marriages in which the partners are not practising Christians, who recognise the right of the Church to exercise her discipline over their lives—not only in this but in other respects. In this way the Church would be able to secure the observance by her children of their obligations in respect to Christian marriage, while she would not be compelled to solemnize the external forms of matrimony between those who do not in fact accept her doctrine as to the nature of the marriage contract. It has been urged that this solution would mean the disestablishment of the Church of England; but this would be better than the profanation of the sacrament of holy matrimony.

It should be added that the Church only sanctions

the exercise of marital relations with a view to the production of children. For this reason the use of artificial means which render the production of children entirely impossible is forbidden to Christians, as being a contradiction of the end for which matrimony was ordained.

## X

## HOLY ORDER

It has been observed that in the course of His life on earth Jesus selected twelve of His followers to be His disciples in a special sense. They were given the privilege of a peculiarly close association with Him in order that after His departure they might be able to carry on the task of preaching to all mankind the salvation which He had come to earth to bring to men. At the day of Pentecost they received a special outpouring of the Holy Ghost to qualify them for the proper fulfilment of the task which He had entrusted to them. That task was naturally in the first instance largely concerned with preaching to others the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead, and that faith in Him was the means by which mankind could hope to obtain forgiveness of sin and eternal life in the world to come. At the same time they were able to exercise remarkable powers in the way of healing sickness, which served to convince the public of the truth of their claim, as did also the power of " speaking with tongues " frequently manifested in the earlier Christian generations. It would seem that this speech consisted of more or less inarticulate utterances of praise to God, parts of which were intelligible to the hearers, while parts were not.

The Christian who manifested it fell into a state of trance in which he was believed to contemplate celestial mysteries, some of which he was able later to communicate to others.

It is natural that in the period of Christian development covered by the New Testament our attention should largely be occupied with those branches of Apostolic activity which are concerned with the preaching of the Gospel to the heathen, or the affirmation of certain elements of Christian doctrine which were naturally not grasped at once by converts just emerging from Judaism or heathenism. We hear comparatively little of the normal sacramental life of the Christian community for the simple reason that it is assumed as a matter of course that it is going on quietly and uneventfully, except where we hear something to the contrary. Thus the Christian ministry as it meets us in the New Testament is very largely one of preaching. But it is only the very erroneous conception of the nature of the Bible current at the time of the Reformation that has led to the modern error that preaching is the main function of the Christian ministry. The value of preaching lies in the fact that it is normally the most convenient method for bringing the Gospel to the notice of the unbeliever or for stimulating the faithful to a greater degree of devotion. In an ideal Christian community it would cease to have any value, for all the members of the community would already be practising the Christian religion to the best of their ability, while there would be no unbelievers to be converted. The only function of oral teaching would be its use for the instruction of the young. Naturally it is not likely that in fact there could ever be a Christian community of this kind; even in remote villages where all the inhabitants accept the Christian faith, there is always the danger that without instruction and exhortation the faithful will relapse into carelessness and slackness. None the less

it must not be supposed that preaching is the primary function of the Christian ministry, or listening to sermons that of the Christian laity.

Consequently even in the New Testament we meet with the beginnings of a transition. We read of groups of local elders or " presbyters," whose office would appear to be modelled on that of the elders of the Jewish synagogues both in Palestine and in the countries of the Dispersion. They are primarily concerned with the government of the local Christian community, the instruction of the faithful and the conduct of public worship. They are qualified to perform these duties by the fact that they have received from the Apostle responsible for the foundation of the local community the gift of the Holy Ghost, conveyed by prayer and the imposition of hands. The power so given them qualifies them for certain duties, whose exact extent is not very clearly specified. It appears however that they represent the Apostle in his absence, though it is not clear from the New Testament itself whether they exercise all his powers or only certain limited elements of it. Probably the need for any exact delimitation in the matter was not felt.

Meanwhile, however, the number of Christian communities was growing rapidly; and it soon became impossible for any individual Apostle to keep in close personal contact with all the communities which he had founded. The New Testament of course only describes in detail the work of St. Paul, but the rapid spread of Christianity seems to imply that other Apostles were able to preach over areas of such extent that it would be impossible for them to be certain of paying regular personal visits to all the Churches for whose foundation they were responsible. Meanwhile the newly formed communities needed supervision of a more authoritative character than the local presbyters could supply. New

errors sprang up, and personal quarrels arose which needed settlement by someone whose verdict all would accept as final. It must be remembered that the local presbyters would often be converts of little more importance than the rest of the members of the community. To meet the difficulty the Apostles appointed some of their most intimate and trusted personal disciples to visit the local communities and settle their difficulties. These delegates of the Apostles often carried with them letters from the Apostles to add weight to their personal influence, but they also were authorised to use a very wide measure of independence in settling the points at issue.

Thus at the close of the Apostolic age we find that the normal Christian community is governed by a group of local presbyters appointed by the Apostle, who himself pays visits to the community as far as the circumstances permit, or if necessary sends a trusted personal representative to settle such matters as the local presbyters cannot deal with themselves. In certain cases these personal representatives are sent to reside more or less permanently at important centres in order to supervise the local community and those of the adjoining region. These Apostolic delegates are for all practical intents and purposes equal in rank to the Apostles.

From this state of affairs it is but a small step to the position which meets us in the early years of the second century A. D. The Apostles are dead, as are for the most part those who had known them in the flesh. But in all large Christian centres we find a college of presbyters at the head of which stands a Bishop, (the word properly means "overseer"). The title of Bishop was in the first instance given equally to all presbyters, as being responsible for the supervision of the local community; it has however by this time been restricted to one person This

one person is not however simply a member of the college of presbyters acting as the President of the college, but otherwise equal to them ; he has rather succeeded to the position of the Apostles or the Apostolic delegates who meet us in the later writings of the New Testament. He is the centre of the whole life of the local community, who presides at its meetings for the celebration of the Eucharist and for other forms of worship, and is responsible for its fidelity to the doctrine of Our Lord and His Apostles. Further in the event of his death his successor must receive from the Bishops of neighbouring Churches his consecration to the office of the episcopate.

The local Bishop appoints and ordains the presbyters to their office. It may be added that in certain cases both bishops and presbyters are nominated by popular election ; but this does not make them bishops or presbyters ; they can only attain to these ranks in the Church by receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost from those who are themselves Bishops, the gift being conveyed by prayer and the solemn imposition of hands.

It is with the functions of these two orders of Bishops and presbyters, or priests, that we are mainly concerned, the third order of the sacred ministry, that of deacons, as well as the minor orders, which no longer survive in the English Church, being in modern usage only preliminary stages in the career to the priesthood, so far at least as the Catholic Church in Western Europe is concerned.

It has already been observed that it is an error to suppose that the primary function of the Christian ministry is preaching. It would be equally erroneous to say that its primary duty is to administer the Sacraments or to govern the Church. The function of the Christian minister is to act as the representative of Jesus in the Church on earth in virtue of the authority to represent

Him which He conferred on His first disciples, and which they in turn have handed down to their successors. As His representative, the Christian minister, possesses the double character which He also possessed ; he represents God to man and he also represents man to God. In a certain sense this character belongs to all Christians ; for all Christians are by the divine gifts bestowed upon them the " Temples of the Holy Ghost," and as such they ought to be a standing revelation of God to the world in which they live, and they should also be in the regular practice of employing the gifts which they have received in order to plead for the welfare of all mankind before the throne of God. On the other hand the Christian ministry has this representative character in a special sense. It is endowed not merely with those gifts of the Holy Ghost which are common to all Christians, but a special gift in virtue of which it is qualified to perform those definitely supernatural functions which Jesus Himself claimed to exercise in the course of His earthly ministry. From this point of view it is convenient for the moment to consider the two orders of Bishops and Priests as one ; this method of procedure is justified by the fact that historically the priesthood is in fact rather to be regarded as exercising certain functions of the Episcopate than as possessing a separate character of its own. The Bishop of a diocese is thus the local representative of Our Lord Jesus Christ, having inherited by succession the powers bequeathed by Him to His Apostles ; while the priest of a parish is also the representative of Our Lord in that particular parish in virtue of that part of the powers of the Apostolate which is conferred on Him by the Bishop.

Now it is necessary to observe that this representative character springs from the divine gift of the Holy Ghost bestowed upon the Christian priest or Bishop at his

ordination or consecration. It does not rest in the power of one man to act as the representative to God of other men, nor yet to act as the representative of other men to God. In so far as the ordinary Christian may be said to do so, his power proceeds from the divine gift of the Holy Ghost given to him as a Christian. The Christian minister possesses this power only in virtue of a special gift of the Holy Ghost given to him for the purpose. It is from this power that he derives his authority to administer the sacraments. He has the right to forgive sins in virtue of the authority to do so which Our Lord exercised during the course of His earthly ministry. He handed on that power to His disciples, who in turn handed it on to their successors. He can offer the Eucharistic sacrifice and by the words of consecration instituted by Jesus Himself turn bread and wine into His body and blood, because he has received a divine gift, in virtue of which he becomes the instrument through whom Our Lord offers here and now the full and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world which He offered once upon Calvary and perpetuates in the Eucharistic rite.

Thus the Priesthood and the Episcopate confer a supernatural character, which enables those admitted to them, although men, to perform, in virtue of their office, the divine functions exercised by Our Lord on earth and to administer the Sacraments, which He instituted in virtue of His prerogative as God, as His agents for conveying to all races and generations of men that supernatural life which He came to bestow on those who follow Him. At the same time, in exercising these functions the sacred ministry acts as representative of man to God. For Bishops and Priests represent the whole body of Christian people. The value of the earthly ministry of Jesus lay in the fact that it was the divine life manifested in man; the death of Jesus on the Cross

derives its value from the fact that He offered it as man, and, by doing so, atoned for the sins of those whose nature He had assumed. The humanity of Jesus now manifests itself in the Church, which is His Body. By this is meant that the human nature, which He manifested once and for all, has now its local and particular manifestation in the whole society of Christian believers, in virtue of the fact that they all are partakers in the humanity which He assumed, as well as in the divine life which He bestows. The ministry of the Church is the agency through which this humanity, now embodied in a human society, finds its expression. For instance in pleading the Eucharistic sacrifice, the Priest represents the whole Church—the society of those who are entitled to the benefits won by the death of Jesus on the Cross. They are entitled to those benefits in virtue of their share in the humanity of Jesus, and can therefore offer His sacrifice as their own sacrifice also. In this respect the Priest is the agent of the whole body; and in the same way in exercising the ministry of Jesus for the forgiveness of sin he also acts as the representative of the whole body, which is injured by the sin of one particular member. In the same way the Bishop in conferring the gift of the Holy Ghost acts not merely as the representative of Jesus in bestowing a divine gift, but also as the representative of the Church in deciding that the recipient is worthy of it.

This representative aspect of the sacred ministry is, however, not the only one, nor indeed is it the principal one. If the Bishop or Priest were simply the representative of man to God, there would be no reason why any Christian should not exercise it. The distinctive aspect of the Catholic conception of these offices is the belief that in virtue of his ordination the minister receives a supernatural gift enabling him to act in the place of Our

Lord Jesus Christ, and to exercise the divine powers which He Himself exercised during His earthly life.

Since, however, it is impossible for man, by any progress he may make in the attainment of Christian holiness, to qualify himself for the exercise of such powers, it follows that the validity of the actions of the minister does not depend upon his personal character. In forgiving sins, in offering the Eucharistic sacrifice, in conferring the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Priest or Bishop is exercising a supernatural authority, which he possesses in virtue of his office, i.e., in virtue of the supernatural power conveyed to him at his ordination or consecration. Consequently the faithful will derive the full benefit of his ministrations as the representative of Jesus, whatever his private character may be: and on the opposite side no amount of progress in Christian holiness will enable the Christian to justify himself for the exercise of the functions of the ministry, unless he has received the supernatural grace conveyed to him by the sacrament of Holy Orders.

It may seem strange at first sight that a person should be qualified to act as the representative of Jesus, when his personal character in no way qualifies him to do so. A moment's consideration will, however, show that this is necessary. No amount of personal holiness could ever qualify the greatest of saints to act as the representative of Our Lord upon earth. Still less would it be possible for any man to say at what point any other had reached a degree of holiness, which, however inadequate in itself, might none the less be regarded as sufficient to qualify him by the help of the grace of God to exercise authority in the name of Jesus Christ. Thus if the validity of the sacraments depended on the personal merits of the minister it would never be possible for the faithful to be sure that they were in fact receiving valid sacraments;

for they could never be certain that the minister, however holy he might seem, was in fact qualified to act as the representative of Christ. He might be merely a successful hypocrite. Thus for the validity of these functions of the Christian ministry personal holiness is not a necessary qualification.

Naturally however it is not to be supposed that the Christian minister is justified in isolating this side of his life from the rest. In the whole of his life he is bound to endeavour to act as one who represents God to man and man to God. His life must therefore be both an example to his flock and also a continual offering of prayer and good works to God on their behalf. In this respect he has a special vocation to holiness of life and receives at his ordination or consecration special gifts of grace to enable him to attain to it. He will have to answer at his judgment for any failure on his part to do so, and for the harm that his failures may have done to the souls of others. Although a deliberate acquiescence in failure to live up to the standard involved in his capacity as the representative of God to man and man to God will not prevent the faithful from obtaining sacramental grace from his ministrations, it may easily lead to the falling away of some who might otherwise have been saved; and for such souls the priest will have to render an account. Naturally it will interfere to a very grave extent with his duty of teaching and preaching the Gospel. For although this is not the sole duty of the Christian ministry, yet it very seldom happens that a large part of the life of the priest is not concerned with it. As a preacher and teacher the priest is the representative of Jesus, carrying on His work of revealing God to man in terms which man can understand. That revelation has indeed been made once and for all in the person of Jesus; but it is the duty of the Bishop or Priest to proclaim it in such a way that all

may hear and understand it. In respect of this part of his duty the functions of the priest are of course to a lesser degree shared by all Christian people; for no genuine Christian can be content unless in his daily life he is in some way or another bearing witness to his faith. But whereas the laity may not have openings for the actual teaching of the faith, it will normally fall to the task of the priest to spend a large part of his time in teaching and preaching. In order to undertake this part of his duties he will need grace to enable him to proclaim aright the doctrines of the Christian faith to those who are committed to his charge, and the chief quality necessary for this purpose will be personal holiness, since normally no one will believe the message of one who does not practice what he preaches. Naturally the means for developing himself in this respect will be mainly the regular and devout use of prayer and the sacraments and the regular offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice, which will continually remind him of his responsibilities, and also provide him with the most effective means of interceding for the people committed to his charge. Further, the priest is bound to the daily recitation of the divine office.

In the Church of England this takes the form of the offices of Morning and Evening Prayer. These services are primarily the worship which priests and those devoted to the religious life are bound to offer daily as part of the offering of prayer to God by the Church of which they are the representatives, not popular devotions for Sunday morning and Sunday evening. In offering it the Christian minister is primarily fulfilling his duty as the representative of man to God; but he is also engaged in a task which will contribute very largely to his own sanctification. Further qualities which he will need, and which he will derive from the grace given him at his ordination and from his life of prayer will be zeal and discretion. To these

again may be added knowledge of the truths which it is his duty to proclaim and of the best methods of bringing them home to the different classes of people to whom it may be his duty to minister. This involves not so much the academic knowledge of Christian theology (for a very small amount of this knowledge will be enough for the ordinary parish priest), as technical knowledge of the best ways of expressing the truth so as to arouse the consciences of different people. Naturally it is impossible here to consider in further detail the qualifications necessary for the Christian ministry; it is sufficient to indicate that its duties cannot be adequately discharged by those who are not seriously attempting to attain to Christian perfection.

It will be gathered from what has been said above that the functions of the Christian priest as opposed to those of the Bishop are the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice and the exercising of the ministry of forgiveness of sins. These parts of the Apostolic office are those delegated to the priesthood; the right to convey the Holy Ghost to others in order to ordain them to the priesthood or to consecrate them to the Episcopate was in the first period of the Church reserved to the Apostles and to the Bishops who are their successors in the full privileges of the Apostolic office. In general the right to give the Holy Ghost in confirmation is also reserved to the Episcopate, though there has been a certain divergence of practice in this respect. As regards the functions of preaching and teaching the two offices vary rather in respect to the nature of the flock committed to the charge of the parish priest and the Bishop respectively than in any difference inherent in the nature of the two offices. The special functions of the episcopate as regards the government of the Church and the preservation of the true teaching of the Church from all forms of error will

be more conveniently treated in Part III of this book.

It should be added that the external form by which the Sacrament of Holy Order is administered is the imposition of hands by the Bishop as the inheritor of the full power to convey the gift of the Holy Ghost which was in the first place bestowed upon the Apostles, the act of the imposition of hands being accompanied by prayers which, either by their actual tenour or by the circumstances in which they are uttered, are clearly intended to bestow this particular grace.

## XI

## THE SACRAMENTAL LIFE

In concluding our consideration of the sacramental system of the Catholic religion, it will be of some value to attempt in the briefest outline to consider the ideal of life which the Church holds before her children. That ideal is the sacramental ideal ; we will examine how that ideal realises itself in practice. It is of course necessary to remember that the ideal is one which is not fully capable of attainment in this life, for it is nothing less than absolute perfection, based on the adaptation of the example of Jesus in the Gospels to the particular surroundings in which the individual finds himself. Many who accept the Catholic religion appear at least to make little or no progress towards it, and to be content to live a life that is little, if at all, better than that of sinners who deliberately reject the whole Christian religion ; such persons, if they exist, are the shame of the Catholic Church, but

it is necessary to bear in mind that it is impossible for man in this life to judge how far those who seem to care little for Christian holiness may not in fact be waging in secret a heroic struggle against almost overwhelming temptations. We shall therefore be considering an ideal to which all Catholics should be continually striving to attain, though full attainment lies beyond the grave: and we shall admit that many fall lamentably short of it, though we can never dare to sit in judgment on any of our brethren.

The Catholic life is a sacramental life in the first instance because it is a new divine life, given to the believer in baptism, reinforced by the gift of the Holy Ghost at Confirmation, and continually nourished by the gift of the Body and Blood of Jesus in Holy Communion. This supernatural life is a divine gift, which the Christian has done nothing to deserve. None the less it depends on his own free choice whether he will allow it to develop, or whether he will allow it to perish. For he can, and does allow it to perish when by deliberate and grievous sin he forfeits his claim to any share in the salvation won by the shedding of the precious Blood of Jesus upon Calvary. Yet by repentance he can regain all that he has lost; and in return for repentance—itself a gift of divine grace—he can obtain in the sacrament of penance a full and absolute pardon for all his sins. Nor will he merely be content to receive the Christian sacraments, as if their efficacy depended simply on themselves, and in no way on himself. For though the grace of the sacraments in themselves is infinite, yet our capacity to assimilate that benefit is not. The extent to which our souls are capable of receiving grace depends on the extent to which by prayer and the continual attempt to labour for Christian holiness, we allow the grace of God to have dominion in them. Hence prayer, especially mental prayer based

on the earthly life of Jesus, and self-denial are necessary to the full living of the sacramental life. All Christian devotion will find its centre in the Eucharist, as the pre-eminent means of grace instituted by Our Lord Himself : but it will also be a life that abounds in every form of Christian devotion.

It will thus be a natural life lived within the natural life of man, but continually looking forward to the time when it will be fulfilled in the glory of heaven. In this sense we may almost say that the whole life of the Christian is in itself a sacrament, since it is a visible embodiment of an invisible divine reality. In order that the divine element may prevail over the earthly, it will be a continual mortification or putting to death of the natural inclination of the heart of man towards evil. Thus any Christian life, if it is in any sense to be worthy of the name, will be a constant watch and warfare against temptation, not merely against temptations to gross and obvious sins (although many in this life may hardly pass beyond the stage of struggle against the more obvious forms of evil), but also against those more subtle but no less deadly forms of evil which may easily bring man to disaster. In particular the Catholic will always be on his guard against spiritual pride. Knowing that he has the true and full revelation of God, he will always watch lest he should fall into any danger of despising those less privileged than himself. He will remember that it is no merit of his own that has won for him so great a favour.

Further, as he advances towards Christian holiness he will find it necessary to limit his enjoyment of innocent but purely natural pleasures. There is no full Christian life that does not demand a bearing of the Cross of Jesus. It may indeed happen to some Christians that the continual struggle against grievous temptations and the humiliation of frequent defeats will furnish the whole of

that share in the Cross which he is at the moment able to bear ; but for all some share of the Cross is necessary, and normally this will involve self-denial not simply in regard to sinful pleasures, but in regard to those that are innocent. Sometimes such self-denial will be absolutely necessary, since pleasures and interests that are not absolutely sinful may easily constitute a serious danger to the individual by threatening to divert his soul from the service of God. For this reason the Christian religion has always upheld the ideal of the religious life—a life devoted to poverty, chastity and obedience as the means for attaining to greater progress in the struggle for Christian holiness. This ideal is not indeed held up before all Christians, but only those who are called to it by God. Some are bound by the claims of human charity and duty to live in the world, and to labour in some ordinary earthly occupation, instead of devoting themselves entirely to a life of prayer or the service of others. But the ideal of the religious life is one which should always be present to the mind of the Catholic ; for he should always live in hope that it may be one day the will of God to call him to it, or at least endeavour in his daily life to approximate as closely as his circumstances permit to that standard of perfection. Naturally those who, while living in the world, also live a life of holiness worthy of those actually called to the religious life will obtain the greater reward.

Naturally the ideal Catholic life may not be one of great earthly success ; but for earthly success the true Christian has no regard. His ideal is the Cross, the symbol of earthly defeat which is heavenly triumph : his heroes are the martyrs who in their earthly defeat obtained the crown of heavenly glory. He will regard earthly success, if it comes to him, as a trivial and irrelevant thing, only caring for the things that are eternal. He will

always have full faith that the cause of His Master will triumph, even if he himself be defeated. Poverty and suffering have no terrors for him ; they are rather the supreme privilege and glory of the Christian who in them is given the glory of sharing in the earthly sufferings of Jesus. Naturally he will not acquiesce in the infliction of these things upon others, and will do all he can to alleviate them as his Master did, Who went about doing good : but as they affect himself, they have no terrors, any more than death itself, which is his final release from the toils and labours of this life and his admission to the presence of Jesus. He must indeed fear death in so far as he knows that he is unready to face the judgment of God by reason of his sins ; but in itself he can only welcome it as his release.

Finally his life is a constant revelation of Jesus to those about him. Always he will be careful lest by reason of anything that he may do, the name of his Master may be blasphemed among the heathen. Wherever the opportunity offers, he will reinforce his passive testimony by the active proclamation of the Gospel to his neighbours ; he will always congratulate as peculiarly privileged those who are called to preach the Name of Jesus to the heathen. Whatever his walk of life may be, he will seek to find some means whereby he may make known to others the secret of that invisible life which is in him.

It may be said that such a life will be one of gloominess and misery. The testimony of those who have advanced furthest in it is decisive to the contrary. It has always been the greatest of the Saints who were most willing to endure every kind of mortification ; it has always been the greatest of the Saints who have been most remarkable for their perfect and spontaneous happiness.

# Part III

# The Holy Catholic Church

# I

## THE NECESSITY OF THE CHURCH

Our Lord Jesus Christ did not merely present a revelation of the nature of God and His relations to man for the benefit of a few particular people, living in a particular corner of the world : His revelation was intended for all mankind of every nation and every time. His method was to select a few persons and to charge them with the task of proclaiming Him to the rest of the world. They formed the nucleus of an organised society whose function it was to bear witness to Him. Even before His coming it had been realised to a limited extent by the Jewish nation that a knowledge of the one true God carried with it the duty of preaching Him to the world : the Jew outside Palestine was normally an energetic missionary to the Gentiles. Although much of this propaganda was the work of individual Jews, yet it centred on the religious organisation of the Jewish nation ; that organisation consisted of local synagogues, each of which owed a rather indefinite allegiance to the supreme Council of the nation, the Sanhedrin, and paid its contributions to the Temple at Jerusalem. It is difficult to see how the Christian revelation could have been preached to the world except through the medium of an organised society charged with this duty. The fact that now, in spite of the divisions of Christendom, the Gospel is preached to all the world, is due to the fact that the various Christian bodies recognise this duty of acting as if each of them had inherited the duty laid by Jesus upon His first

followers: several of them of course claim to be the only genuine heirs of those followers and deny the right of others to teach in His name. In spite of this, the divisions of Christendom are generally felt to be a grave hindrance to the preaching of the Gospel: it is now almost universally agreed that there ought to be a single Christian body, and that the existing divisions are gravely contrary to the intention of Our Lord.

Most Christians indeed would go further than this and hold that there is in fact only one society or organisation which has the right to preach in the name of Jesus, that body being the Holy Catholic Church. As to the exact nature of that body there is indeed the utmost controversy. Some would claim that all followers of Jesus are *ipso facto* members of that one body, at any rate if they have been admitted to it by baptism. Others hold that only one particular body has any right to the title: this is of course the claim of the Holy Roman Church, and formally at least of the Holy Orthodox Church of the East. Others would say that certain Christian bodies are within the one true Church, and therefore, although outwardly divided, are yet inwardly one, while other bodies are outside it. But on the main point almost all Christians are agreed, that there is in fact only one body, the Holy Catholic Church, which has the right to preach the Gospel, and that even though that body may not be visibly one at the present moment, yet its divisions are only external and apparent: inwardly it is one. Even so it is the duty of all Christians to labour for the removal of the external divisions. But this body has not only the duty of preaching the Gospel. It possesses a divine authority, arising from the fact that it is the body of Christ, animated by the indwelling power of God the Holy Ghost, given to it on the day of Pentecost. The purposes for which this authority is needed are

several. In the first place it gives power to the preachers of the Gospel to proclaim their message aright. In the second place it empowers ministers of the Church to administer the Sacraments ordained by Our Lord. (Although many Christians bodies reject large portions of the Sacramental system of the Catholic Church, yet most of them would admit that their authority to administer those parts which they retain, in whatever sense they retain them, proceeds from the presence of the Holy Ghost in the particular body as part of the Catholic Church.) Further in virtue of his membership of the one Body the individual Christian has the power to enjoy the guidance of the Holy Ghost in his personal service of God.

So far there would be a general agreement among all Christians: but at this point the agreement ends. The main cause of the existing divisions of Christians is the question whether in addition to these functions exercised in the Church by the Holy Ghost, there is a further one by which He enables the Church to decide with absolute authority the true meaning of the one divine revelation given by Jesus, rejecting false explanations of it and verifying the attempts of Christian thought to grasp with increasing fulness the implications of the life and teaching of Jesus, His death and Resurrection. The body known in history as the Holy Catholic Church has always in fact claimed to possess such a power: and when the external unity of Christendom was broken by the schism between the East and the West (formally on a particular doctrinal development, actually on the method by which doctrinal development ought to be effected), the two divided bodies, each of which claimed that through the fault of the other it had now become the whole Church, still claimed the right to exercise it. At the Reformation, however, a new theory was put forward. It was urged

that the Bible itself contained all that was necessary for the salvation of Christians. No doctrine that could not be clearly proved by the teaching of the Scriptures could be regarded as being part of the Christian faith : it could at best be a matter of pious opinion, while it was open to grave suspicion as a superstitious addition to it. Meanwhile the East and the West remained divided, not indeed on the question of the right of the Church to interpret with authority the implications of the Christian revelation, but on the manner in which the authority of the Church was to be exercised.

We have seen that the necessity of the Church as a body authorised to teach in the name of Jesus is generally admitted : we have now to consider the question whether this duty of teaching carries with it a duty of interpreting the implications of the original revelation of Jesus, and, if so, what is the nature and extent of the authority of the Church in this matter, the method by which it is exercised, and the extent to which the decisions made by the authority of the Church can claim the assent of all Christians. It will of course be observed that it has in earlier chapters of this book been assumed that the Church has in fact such an authority : it is the task of the following chapters to justify this assumption.

## II

## THE CHURCH AND THE SCRIPTURES

It has already been noted that the Protestants of the Reformation rejected the whole conception of the necessity of the authority of the Church in interpreting Christian doctrine. They urged that all necessary truth was to be

found in the Bible. Now we cannot say in advance that Our Lord could not have laid down a complete scheme of Christian theology and Christian morality, contained in a series of sacred books, which would have left no scope for the development of anything further. We can only say that in fact He did nothing of the kind. The Jewish nation indeed, when He appeared, believed that the whole revelation of God to man was contained in the sacred books of the Old Testament ; but already they had been driven by their belief to various expedients by which they could appear to maintain their allegiance to the letter of the Law and yet expand it in order to meet what they regarded as the needs of the day. Our Lord rejected the whole conception. His religion is not the religion of a book, but the revelation of God in the form of a human life. He does not lay down a system ; He issues a challenge, which His followers are to answer ; " Whom say ye that I am ? " He claims indeed to be the fulfilment of the earlier divine revelation given in the Old Testament ; but he nowhere explains in detail the relation of his followers to that older revelation. He does not even definitely lay down whether they are still to obey the old Jewish Law or not ; the point was left for His followers to decide.

Nor did the first generation of His followers arrive at any definite scheme of theology ; the later books of the New Testament present us with the outlines which Christian theology was to follow, but they do not elaborate a definite system of Christian doctrine. In many of the controversies of the Christian Church both sides have quoted passages of Scripture calculated to support their view, and it is often hard to say that the orthodox party were better off as regards the number and suitability of the texts they quoted than their opponents. It is indeed true that the orthodox interpretation of the person of

Our Lord and His relations to the Father, (the doctrines of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation and the like) are the only interpretation of the Scriptures which are really compatible with their contents taken as a whole: but it is entirely erroneous to suppose that they are so self-evident in the pages of Scripture that it is possible for any Christian to find them there with absolute certainty; in point of fact many who profess themselves Christians have been led by the study of the Scriptures to an entirely erroneous view.

The error of the Reformers was not, however, entirely unnatural. At the time everyone accepted the conception of the Bible as an infallible oracle, in which the truth could be discovered immediately by all who sought it. The Roman Church indeed claimed that the truth could only be discovered if the Bible were interpreted in accordance with the traditional teaching of the Church, but did not deny that, if interpreted in accordance with that traditional teaching, infallible guidance could be obtained from the letter of the Scriptures. The Reformers on the other hand claimed that certain fundamental doctrines of Christianity were so clearly proclaimed in the Scriptures that there could be no question of disputing them. The real fact was that no serious theologians disputed these doctrines, and hence it was not noticed at the time that in fact there is scarcely a single orthodox Christian doctrine apart from the teaching that God is one, which is laid down in an exact verbal form in the Scriptures. The whole body of orthodox theology was arrived at as the result of centuries of controversy in which both sides believed quite genuinely that they were supported by a true interpretation of the Bible.

The deficiency of the Protestant view was not so clearly noticed as it might have been, owing to the fact that the Roman theologians allowed themselves to be

diverted from their true case, the impossibility of proving even the fundamental doctrines of Christianity from the text of the Bible without some authoritative tradition as to the right way of interpreting it, into an attempt to justify the specific practices and teachings which the Reformers criticised by the quotation of isolated Scripture texts. This was a favourite weapon of the Reformers and is not yet entirely obsolete in Christian theology. The real weakness of the Protestant point of view first became manifest in the regions where Protestantism obtained the control of all organised religion. Immediately it began to break up into a number of warring sects, each appealing to the text of the Scriptures and claiming their own interpretation as the true one. In history the claim to appeal to the authority of Holy Scripture has, in fact, meant an appeal to Holy Scripture as interpreted by the theological system of some particular religious body. Nominally indeed it is claimed that the supreme authority is Holy Scripture as interpreted by the conscience of the individual Christian: in fact it has always meant the establishment of a system of theology, based on a particular conception of the true meaning of the Christian religion, as the one correct method of interpreting the Scriptures. Obviously this is simply to erect the new tradition or convention into the supreme standard of Christian authority.

The development of modern criticism of the Scriptures has made the claim to regard the Scriptures, and the Scriptures alone, as the infallible source of Christian doctrine more untenable than ever. It is quite clear that the books of the Bible are not simply the product of divine inspiration in the sense in which the term was formerly understood. They were not simply transcribed from a divine dictation, which left no scope for the individuality of the author. They are affected by personal

peculiarities; in many cases they reflect the views of opposing sides in periods of controversy; there is even reason to suppose that in some cases the narrative of the life and teaching of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels has been affected by the controversies of the primitive Church. This development of learning renders more necessary than ever the recognition of some system of authority which will enable the Christian to interpret the Bible correctly: the attempt to establish the Bible as interpreted by the individual conscience as the sole authority of Christian faith and morals is seen more clearly than ever to be unworkable, since it involves the ability of the individual Christian to decide for himself which elements in it are of universal application, and which are the expression of the beliefs of a particular period of Jewish or Christian development. (It should be noted that the attempt to make the Bible the sole source of Christian authority does not concern matters of dogmatic belief alone, but the whole moral life. The appeal to the Bible may easily result and has often in the past resulted, in the denial of the right of the Christian to own any personal property or his right to defend himself against any form of aggression: it may equally well result in the assertion of his right to put to death all who do not share his religious views or to marry as many wives as he pleases.)

The attempt has been made in recent years to avoid the difficulty involved in the appeal to the Scriptures and the Scriptures only, by maintaining that the supreme authority is Our Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in them. In point of fact this change of ground does not help matters. The revelation of Our Lord as recorded in the Scriptures does not, as we have seen, necessarily involve the orthodox system of Catholic theology as to His personality and His relations both to God and to mankind,

in the sense that it is impossible for any one to read the New Testament without arriving at the orthodox interpretation. It gives the individual Christian no means of deciding whether some of Our Lord's commands are universal in their application, or only intended for those in certain states of life. (For instance it has always been held both by Catholics and orthodox Protestants that His prohibition of re-marriage after divorce is absolute, His prohibition of the possession of riches only intended for those who have a special vocation to a life of poverty: but it is very hard to see how this distinction can be justified apart from the belief that the Church has a right to decide in the matter). Moreover, although in the first instance Scriptural criticism in England was mainly concerned with the Old Testament, it is tending to concentrate more on the life and teaching of Jesus: it has claimed the right to test the geunineness of the Gospel narratives and even to question the value of that part which it admits to be genuine. For these reasons the attempt to establish the Scriptures as the infallible and immediate test of truth in all matters of faith and conduct is untenable. It is the unhappy result of controversy among Christians that it invariably emphasises points of difference and tends to obliterate points of agreement. For this reason it is perhaps desirable to point out that in fact the attempt of the Reformers to establish the authority of the Bible represents a quite genuine attempt to restore the balance of the Christian faith, at a time when such an attempt was sorely needed. The state of Christianity in the later Middle Ages will be considered in a later chapter, but it is necessary to consider here the permanent position of the Scriptures as a factor in the Catholic conception of Christian authority. Their position is not that of an immediately infallible collection of oracles, in the sense that any Christian can,

by the appeal to any isolated text, establish with final certainty any article of faith or rule of conduct. They contain the account of the preparation of the Jewish nation by a continued series of partial revelations for the full revelation of God given to mankind in the person of Jesus, the narrative of His life, death and resurrection, which are the account of the full and perfect revelation of God to man and the redemption of man by God, and the record of the teaching of the first generation of Christians as to the life and work of Jesus. Since that teaching was accompanied by a special measure of divine inspiration, it was able to lay down permanently the lines which the subsequent teaching of the Church was bound to follow, if it was to be true to the original revelation on which it was based. For these reasons all Christian theology must be true to the Scriptures in the sense that nothing can be taught as of faith which is not explicitly stated in the Scriptures, or implied in what is explicitly stated in them. In this sense they are the source of all Christian doctrine; but they are not by themselves an authority which enables the individual Christian to decide on their true meaning and implication.

## III

## THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS

In certain popular treatises on Catholic theology it is sometimes possible to find an error exactly opposed to that which we have just been considering. Language is employed which seems to imply that it is the function of the authority of the Church to lay down what the Christian is bound to believe, and the function of the Christian

to believe it. The whole process is described as though truth depended on the pronouncements made by ecclesiastical authorities with regard to it. This is obviously not the case. We have seen already that the authority of the Church is not unlimited: it is confined by the necessity of harmonising its pronouncements with the revelation of God given in the Scriptures.

This however is not its only limitation. We have already noticed that Our Lord does not lay down a system of doctrine: He presents Himself as a challenge. The first rudimentary version of a Creed is contained in St. Peter's reply, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," to His question, "Whom say ye that I am?" Our Lord appeals to those whom He has chosen as His immediate personal followers. They have facilities not available for others to answer the question. Their acquaintance with Him and their personal devotion to Him enable them to give a better answer than the rest of mankind. Now if we consider the method by which Christian beliefs have been formulated in the past, we shall find a precisely similar process at work. Christianity began with personal devotion to Jesus, based on the fact that in His death and resurrection alone could His followers obtain salvation: there was none other Name under heaven given among men. This devotion was at first content with very little doctrinal elaboration as to the precise nature of His personality and His relations to the God Whom He claimed as His Father.

This state of things could not, however, last for long. With the teaching of the Gospel there came the necessity for summarising exactly what the Christian community believed as to the life and death of Jesus, His relation to the older religion of the Jews, the nature of the salvation He had brought to man, and the way in which man could obtain that salvation. In this way formal Creeds

began to grow up. They were soon employed not merely as summaries of Christian doctrine but also as means of excluding false conceptions of the Christian revelation. Such false conceptions appeared from the first moment of the preaching of the Gospel to the heathen world. There were some who sought to bind the Church to permanent allegiance to the Jewish Law: there were others who sought to amalgamate it with the various religious movements of the age in which it was preached. Invariably the motives for which these false conceptions were rejected were the same. The reason for the rejection of the Jewish Law was the feeling that it was derogatory to the person and work of Jesus to suppose that those who believed in Him were also bound to obey the Jewish Law if they wished to obtain full salvation both in this world and the next. The reason for rejecting any attempt to amalgamate Christianity with other religions was the feeling that the position of Jesus was unique. He was the one redeemer of mankind, the one revelation of the one true God, not a partial and local revelation of a deity who had also revealed Himself in part through other similar semi-divine redeemers.

In later years the Church followed the same principle. Beliefs were rejected which denied either the fulness of the Godhead of Jesus or the reality of His manhood, in part because they were inconsistent with the Scriptures, but mainly because they were felt to be inconsistent with that devotion which all Christians had always rendered to Him. Often, as has been noted, it is very hard to say that orthodox Christianity was right and the false system of teaching wrong, if we merely judge of the merits of the controversy by the words of the Scripture texts to which either side appealed. The justification of the orthodox attitude is that it was the correct explanation of the Scriptural revelation as interpreted by the devotion of

Christians from the beginning. The false doctrines would have introduced an element different from the faith of earlier times; although such doctrines might not have been in formal contradiction of anything explicitly held by an earlier generation, they would have been incompatible with the devotional attitude of such generations to the person of Our Lord and the contents of His revelation.

We have thus arrived at a second limitation of the exercise of ecclesiastical authority. It is bound by the belief of the Christian consciousness as to the implications of the revelation of God in the person of Our Lord Jesus Christ. This limitation has always been recognised in theory, although it has often been stated in misleading and inaccurate terms. For instance it is sometimes expressed in the rule *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*. This rule (that the Catholic faith is that which has been believed at all times, in all places, by all Christians), is true, if it means that the Catholic faith in its historical development is limited to the rendering explicit of truths implied in the devotional consciousness of all Christians, although not consciously held by them. It is quite inadequate if it is held to mean that the Catholic faith is limited to that which all generations have consciously and explicitly believed. It is for instance quite idle to suppose that the orthodox belief as to the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Our Lord was explicitly present to the mind of St. Paul, who had no means of foreseeing the controversies which resulted in the formation of that doctrine. None the less Christian authority in its definitions of doctrine has always claimed that what it lays down is simply the universal faith of Christians; and although those responsible for such definitions may have supposed quite erroneously that the faith which they laid down had been

explicitly held by earlier generations, yet they were right in claiming that the orthodox interpretation, and that alone, was compatible with the devotional implications of the universal consciousness of Christians, which the controversies of the time or the general needs of the Church forced them to formulate in explicit terms.

Thus the second limitation of the authority of the Church is that it must proceed from the religious consciousness of Christians as to the truths implied in Christian devotion. This view is sometimes expressed in the form that the ultimate source of Christian authority is the religious experience of Christians. Either phrase is liable to misunderstanding, and it is therefore necessary to observe several important qualifications.

The terms "religious consciousness" and "religious experience" must not be taken to refer to any abnormal variety of religious experience, such as either the sudden access of enthusiasm which is fairly commonly experienced during the opening stages of a serious attempt to lead the Christian life, or yet any of the more advanced forms of mystical communion with God. Still less must it be held to mean visions or other abnormal phenomena. Any complete system of Christian theology must of course recognise and account for these forms of experience; but they are not more than a very small and unimportant element in the sum total of the religious experience of Christians. That experience denotes primarily the ordinary processes of prayer and sacramental worship, with their proved efficacy to enable the Christian to grow in holiness and the love of God. The value of the religious life of the primitive Christians, as the means of producing a type of holiness greater than anything hitherto known in the world, was the main argument by which they converted the heathen around them; and to a less extent this was true of the Jewish religion before the preaching

of the Gospel. The holiness of Christians has always been the main argument for Christianity. Now this holiness was from the first based upon devotion to the person of Our Lord; and it was the sense that anything but the orthodox account of the person of Jesus was incompatible with the devotion which Christians felt towards Him which was responsible for the rejection of the various false doctrines as to His nature and relation to God, which abounded in the early Christian centuries. The false teachings were in the first instance felt to be alien to the instinct of Christian devotion, before Christian theology had investigated the reasons for which they could be seen to be false. In the same way the instinct of Christian devotion led to the offering of worship to the Saints: Christian theology only justified the practice after it had arisen. But in all cases this devotion proceeded from the normal development of the religious consciousness, not from any abnormal phenomena of mystical experience. Even where, as in a few cases, such phenomena have played a part in the growth and formulation of Christian doctrine, the Church has never regarded them as possessing any authority; where such experiences have been claimed as divine revelations, the Church has always exercised the right of testing them by their consonance with the general body of Christian doctrine, to reject them if incompatible with it, and only to accept them as incidental confirmations of truths which had been otherwise ascertained.

Again it has been noted that the Protestants of the Reformation claimed authority for the Scriptures, as interpreted by the individual conscience. The defect of this point of view is its failure to allow for the fact that no single human being can grasp the whole content of the Christian revelation. If it were possible to analyse the psychological value of the doctrines of Christianity to

the devotional life of all the Christians in the world, we should find an infinite variety. An obvious and highly important instance of this inadequacy of the individual mind as a guide for the interpretation of the Christian religion may be found in the case of St. Paul, who states : "If we have known Christ after the flesh, henceforth we know Him no more." His meaning is that in view of the supreme importance of grasping correctly the work of Our Lord as a supernatural Redeemer, it is at least comparatively unimportant to care about Him as a human example. It is obvious that the Pauline conception by itself would be as defective as is the conception of those who see in Our Lord simply an example of human perfection and nothing more. It is not necessary here to enquire how far this isolated utterance can be taken to represent St. Paul's permanent outlook, or how far it is a highly emphatic utterance of the importance of Our Lord's work as a Divine redeemer, put into a somewhat startling form for purposes of controversy. It is enough to notice that these two aspects of Our Lord's work almost invariably tend to assume a different degree of importance in the religious outlook of different Christians, or indeed of the same Christian at different stages of his development. In the same way other aspects of Christian doctrine and practice, whether of fundamental importance or quite minor details, have different values for different people. Consequently the conception of Christianity present at any given moment to any individual Christian is very limited and one-sided. On the other hand the general religious outlook of a large body of Christian opinion will not suffer from this defect ; what seems of little value to one will seem of the utmost value to another. Thus the religious consciousness of Christians as to the truths implied in Christian devotion, or the religious experience of Christians, must be taken to refer not to the private

devotion of the individual Christian, but to the corporate religious experience of the whole Christian body.

It is from this corporate religious experience of the Christian body that the development of Christian doctrine and the rejection of false doctrinal systems has in fact proceeded. Thus it was the intuitive grasp of the fact that Christianity supplied a fulfilment of the religious aspirations of mankind which no other system of religion could give that led, under the guidance of the Apostles by the Holy Ghost, to the rapidity of its early progress. The same holds true of the development of particular portions of the Christian system. Even where, as has often been the case, developments have been accepted or rejected mainly as the result of the teaching of a single theologian or a group of theologians, yet the success or failure of such theologians has been due to the fact that their teaching has been felt to be the true expression of what all Christians have hitherto held, or to be fundamentally incompatible with it. (This point will be more fully considered later).

At the same time it is obvious that the value of the general acceptance or rejection of a particular element of Christian doctrine or practice by the corporate religious consciousness of Christians will very largely depend for its value on the extent to which that corporate consciousness represents a wide variety of intellectual and social development, and also on the extent to which it is arrived at by the free judgment of the individual Christians whose religious experience makes up the whole sum of the corporate consciousness.

One of the strongest arguments for the truth of Christianity is the fact that it was first preached in a period in which races of the most divergent types and temperaments were combined under a single system of government, and found itself able to appeal with equal success

to every one of these types; and yet this success was achieved not by the assistance of any kind of governmental compulsion, but in the teeth of official persecution. It is obvious that the value of a general consent of a wide body of Christian opinion will be very much diminished, if it is entirely made up of the opinions of Christians whose whole outlook on life is more or less identical, and who are content to accept without question a generally dominant intellectual tradition; it will be very much increased if it is composed of the opinions of those who on every other matter follow absolutely different lines of intellectual belief. In the same way it will be very much reduced if the apparent consent is due to the fact that ecclesiastical authority is constantly vigilant in suppressing any expression of independent thought, and is able to make its attempts at suppression effective; it will be increased, if it is the result of free expression of opinion. Although hitherto we have treated the consensus of the corporate religious consciousness of Christians as if it were a purely natural growth, due to the instinctive re-action of the minds of individual Christians towards new interpretations of the Christian revelation, yet it must never be supposed that it is simply a natural phenomenon of the human intellect. It must always be remembered that the "instinctive re-action" is the work of the Holy Ghost operating through the religious consciousness of the faithful and guiding them into the fuller understanding of the truth.

The effect of this guidance will not of course be confined to the instinctive consciousness of a large number of individuals. It will often manifest itself through the teaching of Christian writers and theologians. In some cases new developments of Christian doctrine have proceeded from a movement among quite uneducated Christians; in other cases they have proceeded from great

Christian teachers. In the same way false developments have sometimes proceeded from the ignorant, sometimes from the learned. But in either case the acceptance or rejection of such developments has been due to the general feeling of the Christian consciousness that the new development was, or was not, a legitimate development of the faith hitherto held by all Christians. The function of Christian learning is to formulate new currents of thought and to adjust them to the permanent deposit of the faith, selecting what is true in them and rejecting what is false. In doing this it is continually enlarging and enriching the contents of Christian devotion; but its ability to do this with success will depend on the power of the theologian to adapt his teaching to the demands of the Christian consciousness. His learning alone will be of little value, if it is seen that his teaching is in fact subversive of the whole devotional life of Christianity. It is perhaps worth noting at this point that for precisely this reason the possession of learning alone without great personal piety will be of little value to the theologian. Pure learning will never compensate for the lack of spiritual insight into the meaning of the Christian religion for the simple reason that it it deals with spiritual facts, which the intellect alone cannot grasp. Thus it has often happened that men of great learning have brought disaster to the Church by allowing themselves to be led away by personal ambition or a lack of the spirit of Christian charity. They have sought not the glory of God and the establishment of the truth, but their own personal triumph in controversy and the overthrow of their enemies. The disasters of the Reformation were mainly due to the failure of both sides to detach themselves from the desire of obtaining an immediate triumph for the causes they represented. The abundance of learning at the time could not compensate for the general

lack of Christian charity; and where charity is absent, the guidance of the Holy Ghost is rendered ineffective. (A similar phenomenon is of course noticeable in other fields of learning: the desire to obtain a controversial victory has often hindered the progress of science).

It has been noted that the consensus of the corporate consciousness of Christians depends very largely for its value on the fact that it represents a wide variety of temperament and outlook on life. None the less its value also depends on the fact that it is the consensus of those who accept the general Catholic system of faith and practice. It has been seen that the doctrinal system of Catholicism grew up out of the consciousness of Christians as to the truths implied in the Christian devotional life. Obviously, however, only those who are familiar with the Catholic system of devotion by personal spiritual experience are competent to judge whether some new development is or is not compatible with that system. The object of the Catholic religion is to bring the soul into communion with God through Our Lord Jesus Christ by the means instituted by Him; only those who have learnt its power to do so can decide whether some new form of teaching is really compatible with the life of communion with God which they enjoy, or not. This claim may perhaps offend the generally current view that any one, who in any sense calls himself a Christian, has a right to express an independent opinion on all matters of the Christian faith; but it is manifestly reasonable. The person, who, with no spiritual knowledge of the Catholic religion, lays down the law as to what the teaching of the Church ought to be, is in fact talking of a subject with which he has not the remotest acquaintance.

This chapter may be summarised by the statement that the ultimate source of authority within the Church is God the Holy Ghost, guiding the corporate

consciousness of the whole body of those who accept the Catholic system of faith and practice into a fuller and deeper understanding of the truths implied in their religious experience and devotional life. That experience and life are based on the revelation of God to man in the person of Our Lord Jesus Christ as recorded in the Holy Scriptures.

## IV

## THE EXPRESSION OF AUTHORITY IN HISTORY

Manifestly the corporate consciousness of Christianity is by itself an inarticulate body of opinions or partial apprehensions of the truth as revealed in Our Lord. It is the supreme authority for the interpretation of His person and work, yet by itself it cannot find any means of articulate expression. Consequently it is necessary that there should be some system by which it can express the postulates on which its existence depends. It is on the historical processes by which it has found the means of doing so that the greater part of the modern controversies as to authority in the Church are centred.

A great deal of confusion in the discussion of the whole problem has been caused by the failure of the various parties in it to grasp the fact that the Christian faith has from the first been a process of development. It has developed from an original deposit of truth, and all new developments must, by implication at least, be contained in that original deposit. But the various sides have constantly tended to bring forward evidence intended to show that their own particular point of view was in fact held explicitly by the first generation of Christians as

part of the original deposit of the faith, or at least that it was so held at a very early period of Christian development; or on the other hand they have attempted to produce evidence that the point of view of an opponent was explicitly denied by all Christians at a time when even the germ from which it developed had hardly been seen to exist. Since the main ground of controversy has been the claim of the Holy Roman Church that the Bishop of Rome as the successor of St. Peter is the supreme authority for deciding in all questions concerning the belief and the moral life of all Christians, a whole system of controversial mythology has grown up around the person of St. Peter, as described in Holy Scripture or reliable historical tradition, and the early position of the See of Rome. Thus it is urged that Our Lord never recognised St. Peter as enjoying any special position as against the rest of His disciples; that in the promises which He is said to have made to St. Peter, He explicitly conferred on him and his successors in the See of Rome the full powers now claimed for the Pope; that St. James the Lord's brother and not St. Peter presided at the Council of Jerusalem; that St. Peter in person founded the Christian Church of Rome; that in fact he never visited Rome at all; that the earliest Christians regarded the Bishop of Rome as the supreme Bishop of the Catholic Church or that they never regarded him as enjoying any position of particular importance whatsoever. There is nothing so discreditable to modern scholarship as the manner in which it has allowed itself to be led into these and countless similar extravagances by the desire to prove some controversial side-issue.

As against this system of mythology we may now examine the actual facts. Our Lord on various occasions formally recognised St. Peter as enjoying a position of primacy among the disciples. He nowhere defined its

scope, nor the mode, if any, in which it was to be transmitted to later generations of Christianity. St. Peter's primacy was recognised by the Apostolic Church, which none the less felt perfectly free to criticise him, if his actions seemed to call for criticism. St. Peter did not found the Roman Church, but went to Rome some time after St. Paul. The two Apostles worked in the city, probably at the head of two Christian communities, which except in so far as the two Apostles and their immediate personal attendants were concerned, had little connection with one another. (This point cannot be regarded as certain, but seems the most probable interpretation of the facts ; the vast population of ancient Rome would render such a state of affairs easy). The two Apostles earned at Rome the crown of martyrdom, probably during the Neronian persecution. From the fact of their ministry there, and from the fact that Christianity had spread from Rome to the rest of Italy and the Western part of Europe (with the possible exception of the Rhone valley, which may have learnt Christianity from Asia Minor), the Church of the city enjoyed a special respect and veneration in those regions ; while the growth of Christianity naturally increased the influence of the Church of the city which was the centre of the civilised world. The more Christians there were, the larger would be the number of those who had visited their brethren in Rome. From the first the position of the Roman Church rested on two foundations, the fact that it had witnessed the later ministry and death of the prince of the Apostles and the Apostle of the Gentiles, and the secular position of the city, (which of course was the reason which had led the two Apostles to work there).

It is therefore essential to abandon the mythological method of argument and to realise that the discovery of methods for the authoritative formulation of the Chris-

tian faith has been, like the Christian faith itself, a process of development. It was always recognised that the Apostles as the divinely appointed rulers of the Church (with St. Peter as their recognised leader), had the right to decide in the first instance what was implied in the teaching of Jesus and their experience of daily life in His society. This power they handed on to the Bishops as the representative rulers of the communities founded by them. The earliest controversies on Christian teaching were decided by local Bishops or groups of the Bishops of a whole area. Later, Councils were summoned, at which all Christian Bishops were present in person or by representation. The unwieldiness of these bodies, the difficulty of summoning them frequently, and their liability to domination by purely human motives led to the growth of the influence of the See of Rome; that influence rested in part on its historical association with St. Peter, the prince of the Apostles, partly on the wisdom with which various occupants of the See had acted in the theological controversies which accompanied the final definition of the Catholic doctrine of the person of Our Lord and His relations to God and man. None the less the formulation of these doctrines, which are the essential foundation of all Christian doctrine, were settled in the main by the voice of Councils representing the whole body of Christian Bishops.

In the period of the barbarian invasions the importance of the Roman See increased in the West, for the Roman Church was the one power which survived the general collapse of Roman civilization. But this growth of influence led to constant friction with the Eastern part of the Church, which culminated in the breach between Rome and Constantinople in 1054. There thus originated two distinct bodies, each claiming in theory to be the

whole Church, each preserving the distinctive features of Catholic belief and worship.

From that date we can distinguish two main periods of development in Western Christendom. The first culminates in the Reformation; during this period the Papacy extends its influence over various spheres of human life and thought: the second stage is that which follows the Reformation, and is marked by the definite claim that the Pope, as the supreme pastor of all Christians, is infallible whenever in that capacity he makes any pronouncement in matters of faith or morals which are to be held as of faith by all Christians. The claim to infallibility was widely held before in the Roman communion, but never laid down as a formal part of the Christian faith; but the main feature of this second period is not in fact the extension of the authority of the Papacy by the formal claim to infallibility, so much as the limitation of the sphere over which the Church, as represented by the Papacy, claims to wield authority. For the modern form of the Roman Catholic conception of the authority of the Church has tacitly abandoned all claim to jurisdiction in matters of political life or scientific thought, both being spheres in which at an earlier period the Church claimed the right to intervene. At the same time the immediate jurisdiction of the Roman Church in the religious life of Western Christendom has been widely extended, as against the authority of the local episcopate.

Now it is very certain that there is no test of a purely historical character which will enable us to discover whether the whole of this development is radically true or radically false. Historians have examined the whole matter, and failed to agree; but they have almost invariably assumed that the nature and function of the authority of the Church is something clearly ascertained and agreed on by all Catholics. We shall in the following

chapters consider whether it is possible to suggest a method of testing the authority of the Church which may lead to a solution of the controversies of the past.

## V

## THE TEST OF AUTHORITY

We have seen that the function of the authority of the Church is to formulate explicitly the truths involved in the religious consciousness of all Christians—to crystallize what would otherwise be an inarticulate mass of varying apprehensions of the revelation of God to man in the person of Jesus. The power which enables the Church to do this is the Holy Ghost, speaking through the organisation which possesses the right to speak in the name of the whole Christian body. At the same time it is generally assumed that since the organisation which speaks, whether Pope or Council, enjoys the right to speak with divine authority, the mere statement of any doctrine carries with it an immediate and oracular infallibility, which all Christians are bound to obey. Obviously this is a very sweeping claim. In fact the claim is so sweeping that it has led to a distinction between two distinct forms in which the authority of the Church may be exercised. The first is that which we have hitherto been considering, and that which has led to the greater part of the controversies of the past, in which the Church, with absolute divine authority, lays down that some doctrine is implied in the Christian faith as revealed by Our Lord and accepted by all Christians. Hitherto this doctrine has not been explicitly believed, because an earlier generation had not seen its necessity; henceforth all Christians are bound

to believe it. The latter form of authority is that which the Church exercises in matters of discipline : it covers a very wide field of different departments of the Christian life. The whole use of the sacramental system of religion is very largely determined by it ; thus the rule that Christians must receive Holy Communion once a year at least, that they must receive the sacrament fasting, that they must use the sacrament of penance once a year at least, are all precepts of the Church, imposed in virtue of her authority to exercise discipline over her children. Yet this latter form of authority proceeds from the same source, the general consciousness of Christians, interpreted by the authority of the Church. In the first instance this authority resided in the local Bishop ; later it was exercised by groups of Bishops or general Councils ; finally a very large power of exercising discipline was centralised in the Western Church in the hands of the Pope, though a certain element of authority in this field has always remained in the hands of the local Bishop. Now this authority is exercised in order to bring home to the individual Christian the application of Christian doctrine to his life ; thus he is told to communicate fasting in order to inculcate on him a certain belief as to the importance of the Holy Sacrament and the reverence due to it. Even the minutest details of regulation as to the ordering of public worship are ultimately intended to inculcate some aspect of Christian doctrine, and to bring it home to the consciousness of Christians who might otherwise fail to appreciate its importance. This authority may be exercised directly in the sphere of doctrine ; the authority of the Church may be used to prohibit some form of teaching, not necessarily on the ground that it is untrue, but on the ground that as stated it might injure the faith of the simple and ignorant. In all cases, however, this exercise of authority depends for its effectiveness on the

fact that it commends itself to the faithful. Where, as has often happened, it has failed to do so, its precepts have been disregarded.

The distinction between these two methods of the exercise of authority is that in the case of the former the Church is irrevocably committed to the truth of what has once been proclaimed. If the Holy Ghost has once spoken, it is impossible that His teaching can be reversed : He cannot lie. In the case of the latter form of authority, although the Pope or Council or Bishop may have enjoyed a certain measure of divine guidance, yet it is not supposed that this guidance has enabled the person or organisation which issues the command to decide anything more than that such a measure is profitable for the particular circumstances of the time and place ; the same body which issued a disciplinary regulation can withdraw or reverse it or allow it to lapse. Further, the individual Christian is not bound to accept the decision of the Church in these fields with internal consent ; he must obey such decisions, but he is not bound to believe in their wisdom, or, where they appear to imply some particular doctrine, to accept that doctrine, if it be not already part of the recognised faith of the Church. He may even question its wisdom or the truth of the doctrine implied in it, provided that he does so without disrespect to the constituted authority of the Church. Now in itself this distinction is, if we accept the general principles of the Catholic faith, perfectly reasonable. If the Christian religion is a permanent divine revelation, it is the duty of the Church to see that her accredited teachers do not introduce new doctrines, calculated, at any rate in the form in which they are stated, to subvert the faith of the general Christian public. Similarly it is reasonable that the Church should be able to exercise her discipline in matters of morals or worship at any given moment. Now in all these different

fields there is a certain element which rests on the explicit teaching of Our Lord Himself or the formal interpretation of His teaching as defined with absolute authority by the Church ; but on any showing that element is comparatively small : there is outside this a wide field, in which the interpretation of that permanent element of absolute truth may need some regulation by the disciplinary authority of the Church. This may be made plain by examples. The union of the divine and human natures in the person of Jesus is a part of the permanent teaching of the Christian faith ; but there have been many discussions as to the exact extent to which Jesus was at various periods of His life explicitly conscious of that union of the two natures in Himself ; and on this the Church has made no final definition. On the other hand a Christian teacher might easily use language on the subject which seemed to deny the reality of the union of the two natures in Him : and the Church has an obvious right and duty to prevent him from expressing his teaching in such a manner as to lead the simple to doubt that reality. Again the only part of the Eucharistic rite which can claim to be of immediate divine institution is the pronouncement of the words of consecration over the elements of bread and wine. The Church has an undoubted right to alter the rest of her Eucharistic worship : but she has also the right to prevent individuals from introducing innovations on their own authority, and from recommending the alteration of her existing rites in a tone which is calculated to undermine the devotion of the faithful to the existing form of Eucharistic worship. Yet in either case it would be absurd to demand that the Church should on all such occasions be compelled to promulgate some new doctrine to which she is pledged to the end of time.

While however it is reasonable that this distinction

between the two forms of ecclesiastical authority should be recognised, it is natural that we should enquire what is the test which enables the faithful to ascertain whether any particular pronouncement is made in virtue of the former power, by which the Church defines with absolute divine authority some truth implied in the original divine revelation committed to her charge by Our Lord and now revealed by the operation of the Holy Ghost within her, or whether it is merely a local and temporary pronouncement called for by the circumstances of the day. But it is precisely on this point that there is no agreement among Christians. One school of thought holds that only the pronouncements of Councils of the universal Church have this final and absolute authority Now it is certain that the pronouncements of the great Councils which laid down the permanent Catholic interpretation of the person of Our Lord and certain other Councils of the undivided Church must be accepted as part of the permanent deposit of the faith ; but it is not at all easy to find any external test, which will enable us to say definitely that certain Councils possess the right to be regarded as Councils of the universal Church, while others, which promulgated teachings afterwards rejected were not. In view of this modern Roman writers tend to put forward the theory that only those Councils which were accepted by the Popes can be regarded as having spoken with full authority, and to argue that this authority is derived from their recognition by the Pope, not from any inherent authority of their own We need not enquire into the exact measure of historical truth contained in this theory, for it presupposes that, once a doctrine has received Papal sanction, its infallibility thenceforth is clearly established. As a matter of fact this is not the case. For the claim to absolute infallibility, as put forward on behalf of the Papacy, is so tremendous that no one has ever

ventured to put forward any test by which it can be finally decided that a pronouncement made by a Pope is to be accepted as infallible and part of the Christian faith. Of all the innumerable Papal pronouncements that have been made there are not more than one or two which would be regarded by the unanimous consent of Roman Catholic theologians as possessing the character of infallibility. The rest would be relegated to the character of temporary measures of ecclesiastical discipline, put forward by the Pope in virtue of his supreme disciplinary power—a power which he is said to exercise as the chief Christian Bishop, not as the supreme pastor of all Christians. Here again it is possible to find quite reasonable grounds for supposing that such a distinction exists in whatever is the final authority in matters of Christian faith and practice; but it must also be pointed out that the distinction was not by any means invariably present to the mind of the Pope who issued some pronouncement, now admitted to have been only a temporary disciplinary measure. What has actually happened is that various Popes have issued pronouncements, which they firmly intended to be accepted as final and endowed with the full weight of Papal authority, not then explicitly defined in regard to its infallibility. Since, however, time has shown that they were in error, it has become necessary to relegate those pronouncements in which the Pope was mistaken to the rank of disciplinary utterances in which the Papal infallibility was not concerned.

There is a further difficulty. The claim of such a colossal scope for certain pronouncements of the Papacy frequently renders it difficult for it to speak with any high degree of authority on any matter of dispute. For instance during the past thirty years there have been continual controversies on the subject of the historical truth of the books of the Bible. It might have been expected that the

Papacy would issue some authoritative pronouncement on the subject. In point of fact it has not done so. It has issued certain pronouncements, intended to allay the doubts of the faithful who were disturbed by the speculations of the time, by seeming to insist on an extremely conservative view on the various points at issue, such as whether Moses was the author of the Pentateuch ; invariably, however, loop-holes were left, which enabled scholars who were prepared to take the risk of official disfavour to put forward the most radical views. For these pronouncements were only disciplinary, and therefore had no claim to internal assent. In the same way, when the system of teaching known as Modernism was widely prevalent in the Roman communion, Pope Pius X condemned certain doctrines, very vaguely described, and ordered that various steps should be taken to prevent them from being taught ; he was unable to define exactly what those doctrines were, or to define any positive truth which would exclude them, for the simple reason that to do so might have been dangerous : it might have exposed the Papal infallibility to the suspicion of having fallen into error.

Thus in fact the external test of Papal approval is of no value as a means for deciding why certain Councils are to be regarded as having spoken with infallibility, so that their definitions of the faith are to be regarded as final, while others are not, for the simple reason that there is no external mark by which it can be ascertained precisely which Papal decisions are infallible and which are not. Yet again it is quite impossible to take the line which certain Anglican writers are in the habit of taking, and dismiss the whole idea of Papal authority as the result of the unjustifiable aggression of the Bishops of Rome on the liberties of the Church. The mere history of the primitive Church neither proves nor disproves the claim

that the authority of the Papacy is a true development from the original germ of the authority conveyed by Our Lord to St. Peter. But the later history of the Roman See, as well as much of its earlier history, is quite clear evidence that it has on many occasions been the main force which has prevented the disappearance of the Catholic religion in Western Europe. Catholicism in the West, as it exists to-day, is the result of a movement within the Roman Church since the Reformation, which saw in the Papacy the centre of Catholic doctrine and Catholic worship ; and without it the Catholic revival in the English Church would have been inconceivable. We cannot dismiss the Papacy as a mere false development without discrediting the whole system of doctrine and devotion which came into the English Church with the Tractarian movement.

Thus we seem to have arrived at a position from which there is no way out. We seem to have no external means for judging what the final teaching of the Church is in matters of faith, which will not either commit us to an untenable conception of the infallibility of the Papacy, or else discredit the whole system of Western Catholicism. For this reason it seems necessary to enquire whether the mistake may not lie in the whole attempt to find immediate external tests of infallibility. What has happened in the past has been that pronouncements have been made with the authority of some person or body which claimed the right to speak in the name of the whole Church. Some of these utterances have been recognised subsequently as true to the original revelation of Our Lord, and its interpretation by the corporate consciousness of Christendom ; others have been seen to be false. (In some cases indeed the errors of such pronouncements have been detected by the light of the human reason and the growth of human knowledge, rather than by the

Christian consciousness; but even in such cases the rejection of such errors is due to the impossibility of believing that God, as conceived by the Christian consciousness, can demand of the human reason that it should commit itself to a permanent belief in what its own nature compels it to reject). Thus in actual history the factor which has selected certain teachings as true and rejected others is the same as that from which the original authority for interpreting the Christian revelation proceeds—the corporate consciousness of Christians of what is implied in their devotional and religious life. It is in fact this consciousness which has accepted certain statements as the permanent and eternal truth, reduced others to the category of partial expressions of the truth, framed for local needs, and rejected others as eternally false.

Now if this fact be recognised it would seem to follow that the ultimate test of the measure of authority, which any statement put forward by the Church can claim, is the extent to which it commands the universal acceptance of Christendom. Naturally in this case we shall have to take into account the factors already noticed in an earlier chapter, namely the extent to which this general acceptance represents a wide variety of temperament and outlook upon life, the extent to which it is free in accepting or rejecting the utterances of authority, and the extent to which it represents those whose conception of religion is in general of a Catholic type. At the same time it would follow that the test of infallibility is not the nature of the authority which puts forward a new statement as to the Christian faith, nor the form in which that statement is presented, but the truth of the statement put forward, the judge of its truth being the corporate consciousness of the Christian world as enlightened by the Holy Ghost. This point is of some importance, for in many recent controversies on the subject there is a tendency to suppose

that the authority of the Church is above the truth; that truth is what authority lays down, rather than that it is the duty of authority to declare and interpret the truth.

Now this view is not incompatible with the belief that infallibility resides in the person or organisation which promulgates the statements which the Christian consciousness accepts; in fact the opposite is the case. Obviously the reason for which the Christian consciousness accepts or rejects a pronouncement put forward with authority (whether by a Pope or a general Council) is its belief that the statement is true. If then a statement wins final acceptance by the general consent of Christendom, it wins it because its truth is recognised. But the truth is inherent in the statement itself. Thus it is necessary to hold that infallibility resides in certain cases in the organ of authority, although the test of infallibility is the recognition of the corporate consciousness of Christendom. At the same time it is clear that if this view be accepted, the infallible guidance of the Holy Ghost must be regarded as manifesting itself in the corporate mind of the Church, no less than in the organ of authority. If this line of argument be accepted, it will follow that we shall look for infallibility rather in the general trend of Christian development than in the oracular infallibility of particular pronouncements. It may be observed as confirming this view that it is analogous to the method of Holy Scripture. Earlier generations sought to establish the truth by the quotation of isolated texts; it is now generally recognised that it must be sought in the contents of the Scriptures taken as a whole. In the same way it seems reasonable to suppose that infallibility is to be found in the general trend of Christian evolution, rather than in particular pronouncements, assumed to be infallible in virtue of some particular external form in which they are promulgated. At the same time

certain particular pronouncements which stand out as landmarks in the general process of evolution will be recognised as having been uttered with the full and infallible authority of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the Catholic Church. The test of their infallibility will be the general recognition by all those who accept the Catholic conception of religion that these particular pronouncements were in fact vitally necessary for the determination of the general lines which that evolution was bound to follow, if it was not to prove radically false to the original revelation of Our Lord and to the whole content of Christian experience. Naturally, however, the mere fact that they are now recognised as infallible involves us in the belief that the quality of infallibility was from the first inherent in them ; the subsequent recognition of Christian experience is the test by which their infallibility is proved, not the factor which confers on them their quality of infallibility. It is only in the case of those pronouncements which have not stood the test of time and selection by the corporate experience of Christendom that we shall feel justified in exercising a certain degree of reserve ; though naturally no Christian has any right to express that reserve in a manner incompatible with the respect due to persons or institutions which have a legitimate claim not merely to respect but to veneration.

## VI

## THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

Clearly if the foregoing conception be true, it follows that the Church of Christ not only must actually enjoy an internal unity in virtue of the fact that it is His Body,

but also that it ought to be outwardly one, possessing the power to formulate, as the need arises, such statements or rules in regard to the faith and practice of Christians as will ensure that the religious life of the individual Christian shall in essential matters conform to the general level of the corporate life of the whole Christian body. In the Roman communion, where the developments of the past have tended to a particularly strong sense of this necessity, it is of course commonly urged that an outwardly divided Church is unthinkable ; it is argued that since St. Peter was the chief of the Apostles and the Pope has inherited his primacy, those who are not in communion with the Holy See are thereby cut off from unity in the body of Christ.

The discussion of the matter is, however, complicated by the general tendency to introduce irrelevant side-issues, such as the fact that this necessity was not explicitly recognised by the earliest generations of Christians on the one hand, or the manifest practical advantage of a visible centre of Christian unity and the high claims of the Roman See to be regarded as the proper centre of Christian unity on the other. These are not relevant to the discussion of the question whether the Roman See is by divine appointment entitled to claim that any Christian body not in communion with it is necessarily and inevitably cut off from the one Body.

Now we have seen that the Church exists to teach the Catholic religion and to maintain the Catholic life. Its authority to do so is the authority of Our Lord transmitted to His disciples by the sending of the Holy Ghost and handed down by them to their successors. Consequently where we find Christian bodies, which have for centuries preserved the Catholic faith, administered the Catholic sacraments, and thereby enabled their members to live the Catholic life, we are compelled to regard the Roman

claim with some suspicion. For the Church was made for man and not man for the Church; and if we find that generations of mankind have enjoyed all the benefits of the life of the Church, although cut off from unity with the Holy See, we shall find it hard to resist the conclusion that they have in fact been within the Church all the time, although the Church has been in a morbid condition of disunion, which does not conform to the intention of Our Lord. Our suspicions will be strengthened if it is clear that the original division was due to the faults of both sides, and arose in part from the advancement of unjustifiable claims on the part of the Holy See and not purely from a spirit of rebelliousness in the body which separated itself. Now this was certainly the case at the time when the Eastern Church broke off from the Western; the cause of the division was partly the ambition of the See of Constantinople, partly the growth of the claims of Rome and the endeavour to impose them on the rest of Christendom by authority, before they had gained general recognition. It was equally the case at the time of the Reformation, when, as we shall see in a later chapter, the Holy See advanced claims to interfere in the political life of the nations of Europe, which it has since admitted to have been unjustifiable by its abandonment of them. (The full discussion of the Anglican position is deferred until a later chapter in view of the historical problems connected with it: the reader is asked to assume it for the moment). We have therefore strong grounds for doubting the Roman claim in view of the proved capacity of the Eastern Church to preserve the Catholic religion and the capacity of the Anglican communion to vindicate its Catholic character in spite of adverse circumstances.

Our doubts are confirmed when we find that as a matter of fact there has been a period of some forty years in the

history of the Church when the Roman See was itself divided. At the time of the great Schism in the West, rival Popes, each enjoying the allegiance of some of the Western nations, claimed to be the only genuine successors to the throne of St. Peter, and anathematised their opponents as having cut themselves off from the unity of the Church by owning the claims of their rival. The Roman Church has never professed to decide which of the claimants was in the right, and which was in the wrong. The scandal lasted for a sufficient time to allow the rival colleges of Cardinals at Avignon and Rome each to elect several Popes : it was only ended by the rebellion of the Christian world, and its demand for a general Council to end the scandal. This episode in history is really fatal to the Roman claim that unity with the Holy See is the one divinely ordained test of unity with the Body of Christ ; for it proves that in certain circumstances it is possible for the centre of unity to be divided. The fact that the disaster of the Schism was mitigated by the refusal of certain parts of the Church to obey the orders of the rival claimants, with the result that in many cases Christians who owned allegiance to one Pope continued in communion with those who owned allegiance to the other, does not help the Roman case ; for this result was only achieved by the refusal of individuals to obey the successor of St. Peter. Consequently it becomes impossible to deny that in certain circumstances the Church may be outwardly divided.

It may indeed be objected that if such a division of the Body of Christ be indeed a possibility, it becomes impossible for the ordinary man to know which is the true teaching of Jesus Christ, and which body possesses the authority to teach in His Name. If the Church be divided, and if the divided portions teach different doctrines, which portion is he to follow, and whose doctrine

is he to accept ? Further, since various bodies, which Anglicans regard as outside the Catholic Church, none the less claim to be within it, how is he, being no theologian, to decide in the obscure theological issues on which their controversies are based ?

In point of fact the difficulty of the ordinary man is not so serious as it is sometimes represented to be. For where he finds that two bodies both claim to be within the unity of the Catholic Church, and both provide him with the general tradition of Catholic doctrine and the sacramental system which is the basis of the Catholic life, and where he finds that the arguments of the rival bodies are so evenly balanced that those who are qualified to form a judgment on the disputed points are divided in their conclusions as to the relative merits of either side, he may fairly assume that it is the will of God which has placed him on that side to which he has been brought by the accidents of birth or upbringing, and be content to remain where he is, praying, and, so far as it lies in his power, working for the outward unity of Christendom, and reposing sufficient trust in the justice of God to believe that, even if he finds hereafter that his judgment as to the question whether he was in fact within the one true Church or not was erroneous, he will not be punished for his failure to decide aright on a point on which his lack of theological training did not permit him to arrive at an accurate conclusion. For it must always be remembered that the unity of the Church, and the Church itself exist in order to enable man to fulfil that eternal purpose for which God created him. Where he is not cut off formally from that general stream of Catholic development in belief and religious practice which is the essence of the Christian religion, and where he has no serious reason to doubt that the claims of those who administer the Sacraments to possess the necessary divine authority is

a genuine one, the individual can scarcely do wrong to be content to wait until it is the pleasure of God to restore the outward unity which ought to be.

## VII

## AUTHORITY IN A DIVIDED CHURCH

We may in conclusion notice the main objection that the Church cannot be outwardly divided without involving the individual in complete inability to know exactly what is the faith which he is bound to believe. By implication, indeed, this difficulty has been met by our inquiry as to the nature of Christian authority; but it is convenient to point to certain practical deductions which will make the position clear. If infallibility resides primarily in the general line of development of Catholic Christendom it will follow that any doctrine will derive its authority from its compatibility with that general line of development. (We are of course only considering those doctrines which have not behind them the claim to absolute and explicit recognition as infallible by the undivided Church). The test of its claim to authority will be its general acceptance by the Christian consciousness. Consequently where any particular doctrine is generally recognised by the consent of Catholic Christians, it will have a strong claim to his assent, a claim which will be considerably enhanced if it has been formally and explicitly defined by some organised body which claims to speak in the name of the whole Church even though that claim is not entirely justifiable. The wide measure of authority which the promulgation and acceptance of such a definition will confer, coupled with the

actual acceptance of the general contents of such a belief by other parts of Christendom will give it little less claim on his internal assent than a doctrine formally defined and universally accepted before the divisions of Christendom arose. A similar measure of authority will be enjoyed by devotional practices prevalent over a wide area of Christendom. If the doctrines implied in any form of Christian devotion are such as are accepted by the whole of Christendom, although the form of devotion in question is not universally practised, the Christian may reasonably assume that the form in question is legitimate and desirable.

This principle is of primary importance as regards the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, and its place in Christian devotion. Although the dogma of Transubstantiation cannot claim the absolute authority of a dogma of the undivided Church, since it was not defined until after the division of East and West, it is very difficult to find any serious distinction between it and the belief of the Eastern Church. Thus the general contents of the doctrine enjoy practically the authority of the universal consent of Christians, although the verbal form of the definition in itself cannot claim the absolute weight of promulgation by the universal Church. In the same way the various forms of devotion towards the Blessed Sacrament common in the Western Church do not imply any doctrine repudiated by the East. Their justification therefore arises from the fact that they are commended by a wide measure of Christian experience and are not an expression of any form of doctrine which is the cause of division among Christians.

The only matters in which difficulties of a serious kind may arise are those in which differences of doctrine or practice have been a permanent cause of Christian disunion. The fact that a particular doctrine is firmly and

strongly held by a large body of Christian experience is strong evidence that it contains an element of truth. But a doctrine may contain an element of truth, and yet be distorted in its expression by the desire of those who hold it to gratify purely human and sinful motives, such as ambition or intolerance of opposition. Hence a doctrine which is in itself true, or at least a partial statement of the truth, may be so put forward as to excite the resentment and opposition of a large number of Christians, who do not as yet appreciate its truth, or consider the manner of its expression to be faulty. Here the Christian will be wise to exercise the utmost reserve, and to wait until the guidance of the Holy Ghost has revealed the exact element of truth and separated the element of falsehood. This consideration applies particularly to the position of the Roman Church. It is ludicrous to dismiss as entirely unfounded a doctrine and a practical system which have played so large a part in the preservation and development of the Catholic religion. It is equally ludicrous to refuse to recognise the fact that it has at times been put forward rather in order to gratify the human ambitions of individual occupants of the Holy See, or as a means of gaining for it a purely secular position in the politics of the world. The Christian will, if he be wise, be content to wait until the working of the Holy Ghost has brought to light the true scope and meaning of the claims to a divine right to a primacy in the Church held by the occupant of the Roman See as the successor of the Prince of the Apostles.

In this way we can hope that the Church will arrive at the solution of her present divisions. It will indeed be objected that it leaves the individual in considerable doubt as to what exactly he is bound to believe. The real answer to this is that on any showing he is in that position of doubt, and that it is desirable that to a very

large extent he should remain so. The attempt of the Church in the later Middle Ages to extend its influence over every department of human thought ended in disaster. It resulted further in the tacit abandonment by the Church of a very wide measure of its claims. The Roman Church now only claims infallibility in the sphere of faith and morals, the two departments of life in which her teaching cannot readily be verified by the general progress of human learning. Yet even in these departments, as we have seen, she is hampered by the danger that official pronouncements may be proved to be untenable, with the result that such pronouncements as she is prepared to make are liable to be vaguely worded and ineffective.

Thus in fact the body of doctrine which the faithful are, on the Roman theory, bound to believe, as against those of other communions, is very limited in extent. A large number of Papal pronouncements are commonly described as being the authoritative and final teaching of the Church, when in fact they are nothing of the kind. Nor is it by any means evil that the scope of the absolutely defined teaching of the Church should be very limited in its extent. Historically the formulation of Christian doctrine arose from the necessity of preserving the faithful from certain peculiarly dangerous forms of false teaching, seen to be subversive of the whole contents of Christian devotion. So long as the essential elements of that devotion are preserved, it is vital that the widest possible liberty should be allowed for the free exercise of the human intellect ; a definition of Christian doctrine by ecclesiastical authority should always be avoided except where it is rendered necessary by urgent peril to the whole Christian faith.

At the same time it should also be noted that the general view that the discussion of the deepest matters of the

Christian faith is open to all Christians whatever their training and their power of grasping the issues involved may be, is as erroneous as the demand for an exact definition of every article of Christian faith or practice. It should be recognised that theology is a branch of learning in which only the expert can pronounce an opinion that is worth considering. Further, it is a branch of learning fraught with immediate consequences to the religious and moral life of the individual Christian. Consequently it is indefensible to put forward new and doubtful doctrines, without consideration of their effect on the immediate audience. In many cases Anglicans have put forward such views without the smallest regard to Christian charity and the danger that they may be wrecking the faith of those for whom Christ died.

Thus it is possible to look forward to a time when the Church shall be restored to unity. In such a re-united body the function of authority will be mainly concerned with the regulation of doctrine by means of such disciplinary measures as may confine the putting forward of new ideas to a form which will enable them to receive the consideration and criticism of experts, without endangering the faith of the simple, and in certain cases forbidding the expression of teachings subversive of the whole faith and morality of the Christian religion. None the less, of such pronouncements some will be seen to possess a higher intrinsic value and importance than others, and may finally obtain the universal recognition of all Christians as part of the deposit of the Christian faith. And at least one of the authorities from which such pronouncements will emanate will be the earthly successor of the fisherman of Galilee who was appointed by Jesus as the prince of the Apostles.

NOTE.—*The authority of Anglicanism.* It might be urged that since the Church of England is part of the Catholic Church, it is necessary

in any attempt to ascertain the implications of the corporate religious consciousness of Christendom to consider the weight of the Anglican part of the Church. Theoretically this is true: practically it is not. For, in so far at least as the official pronouncements of the English Church are concerned, they are vitiated by the fact that they are invariably the result of an attempt to compromise with that element of purely Protestant opinion, which has since the Reformation succeeded in maintaining a foothold within the limits of the English Church. From the point of view urged above, the value of religious experience is confined to those who accept at least the general outlines of the Catholic conception of religion: the experience of those who reject it is worthless, precisely to the extent to which they reject it. Consequently the weight of the corporate consciousness of Anglicanism as formulated in its official pronouncements will remain negligible, as long as it is the expression of an attempt at a compromise with those who entirely reject the general principles of Catholic devotion.

## VIII

## THE CHURCH IN HEAVEN

We have hitherto been considering the Church as it exists at any given moment in the present world. From the purely human point of view it consists of a certain number of individuals organised into a visible society for the preservation of certain teachings as to the nature of God and His relations with man, and for the provision of certain means by which man can approach to Him. From the divine point of view however it is the body of Christ, the external manifestation in the world of Jesus Himself, just as His human body was in the days of His earthly life the means by which He made Himself known to men. But at the same time all those who in their life on earth have been admitted to membership in His Body, remain members of it eternally, except in so far

as they have by their own deliberate preference of evil to good rejected the privileges bestowed on them at their baptism. Consequently those members of the Church who happen at any given moment to be living upon earth are only a part of the whole Body of Christ, as it exists in reality. The vast number of those who have served Our Lord Jesus Christ faithfully in this world, and have now departed from it, are now united to Him far more closely than ever they were in this life.

The phrase " united to Him " is of course a metaphor which cannot be pressed too closely ; for the individual Christian never loses his personal individuality, nor yet those various personal qualities which on earth made him what he was. Except in so far as they were definitely sinful and needed to be eliminated by purification before he could be admitted to the full enjoyment of the presence of God, he retains to all eternity his own personal qualities of mind and character. It is from the fact that, as we know them in the present world, these qualities are in some undefinable way united with the purely material elements of our physical nature that Christianity has always taught the Resurrection of the body, a phrase which need not necessarily imply the resurrection of the purely material elements of the physical nature, but excludes the idea of the bare survival of a personality from which all the characteristics, which depend in this world on the union of the soul with the material body, have been separated.

In so far as they have already attained to full perfection, i.e. the fullest perfection of which they individually are capable, the faithful servants of Jesus who have departed from this world enjoy the bliss of being admitted to His presence. Naturally here again we are forced to use phrases which are at the best inadequate earthly metaphors for a state of union with God in Jesus which it is beyond

the power of human language to express. As is well known the Book of Revelation describes the glory of the blessed in heaven in imagery borrowed from the pomp of Oriental courts familiar to the older Jewish writers in whose thought and language the author is steeped. The imagery which we may choose to employ does not particularly matter, so long as it is recognised that it is only imagery which must always be inadequate to express the fullness of the truth. In that truth there are two aspects which must always be borne in mind, the intimate union of the righteous, who have been made perfect, with their Lord, and their complete retention of the whole of their human personality, except in so far as it was affected by sin.

In this state they are by no means cut off from knowledge of the lives of their brethren of the Church on earth, who are no less than themselves members of the Body of Christ. They are still members of the Church though they have passed from that part of it which is still fighting in this world against the powers of evil and have passed to that part of it which is enjoying the rewards of victory in heaven. For this reason the Saints in glory are sometimes referred to as the Church Triumphant, the members of the Church on earth as the Church Militant. In virtue of their triumph they are still able to render their assistance to those who have not yet been released from the struggle, or, though released from the struggle, have not yet attained to their full perfection. The manner in which they render this assistance cannot indeed be adequately expressed in human language. In one passage of Scripture the Saints of the Old Testament are described as watching the labours of the infant Church like spectators watching a race in the amphitheatre; in another the martyrs of the early persecutions are described as clamouring to God to avenge the blood of those who are still suffering for His sake on earth.

Since the highest activity known to created beings in this world and the most efficacious means for rendering assistance to others is prayer, it is customary to describe the mode in which the Saints in glory assist the Church on earth as consisting in offering intercessory prayer for them. Naturally the imperfect prayer of those in this world is a very poor thing as compared with the prayer of those who have attained to the full vision of God. None the less the conception is valuable as eliminating from Christianity the danger which might otherwise arise, of exalting the Saints into beings of a more or less divine character, able to offer an assistance independent of the divine will. It emphasizes the fact that as created beings they can only render to the Church on earth a measure of assistance limited by their capacities as created beings, and do not possess that immediate power of ordering the events of this world which is proper only to God.

In using language of this kind we consider rather the individual activity of the Saints; we may if we like consider rather their corporate action, by which those members of the body who have already attained to their perfection, are able, under the disposition of the Head, to assist those members who are still suffering in the state of imperfection, provided that we do not lose sight of the fact that the individual members still remain independent personal beings and retain their power of independent personal activity.

Since moreover the measure of perfection of which the individual is capable varies in accordance with the capacities bestowed upon him, and since the essence of perfection is personal union with Our Lord Jesus Christ, it has from a very early time been the belief of Christians that the one person who was called on earth to stand in the most intimate personal relation with Jesus was specially fitted for her place by a pre-eminent measure of

divine grace, and that by her fulfilment of her task she was privileged to receive a peculiar reward of glory in heaven. That person is Mary the Mother of Jesus. It is the general belief of Christians that that deliverance from original sin which is accomplished in the case of ordinary Christians at baptism, was accomplished in her case by a special act of divine grace at the first moment of her existence, and that by the grace of God she was enabled to live without actual sin. It should be noted that this does not imply that she was raised to a supernatural order in which temptation had no power to attract her; it implies that she received the benefits of baptism by an act of divine grace, and subsequently used the means of grace with unvarying success, whereas the ordinary Christian, enjoying far greater means of grace in his full knowledge of the Gospel, which was only gradually unfolded before the eyes of Mary, does as a matter of fact repeatedly fail to use them. Similarly it is the general belief of Christians that her special call to personal intimacy with Jesus was rewarded with a special degree of glory in heaven. The main argument in favour of this view lies in the obvious fact that God in choosing his agents for the working of His will in this world, chooses those who are qualified for the duty to which he calls them, and gives them grace to fulfil their vocation. It is true that He sometimes uses the wicked as involuntary instruments for the fulfilment of His designs without their consent and even against their will; but in calling men to co-operate with Him of their own free choice, as He called Mary, He calls those who are duly qualified to answer Him.

Note.—It may be observed that while the view that the Mother of God was freed at the moment of her conception from the taint of original sin, commonly known as the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, was only proclaimed by the Roman Church to be a dogma

to be accepted as of faith by all Christians some seventy years ago' and was in earlier times disputed by many theologians including St' Thomas Aquinas, the belief in her freedom from all sin both original and actual has been generally accepted by Catholic theologians from very early times.

## IX

## THE CHURCH IN PURGATORY

It is an obvious fact of experience that there are very few Christians indeed who at the moment of death can be supposed with any show of reason to have attained that stage of holiness which will qualify them to stand in the presence of God. Indeed even those who have advanced furthest along the road to perfection are normally conscious of themselves as being the chief of sinners. It is manifest that we cannot suppose that only those who at their death have attained to absolute perfection can hope for eternal salvation; such a supposition would involve the belief that practically the whole of mankind is lost. On the other hand it can scarcely be supposed that the divine justice makes no distinction between those who have by their steadfast attempts to submit to the action of grace upon their souls advanced far in the path of holiness and those who have turned at the last moment by a sudden though genuine repentance from a life of evil. It seems necessary to suppose that the latter must undergo a process of purification from sin after death, in order that they may attain to the holiness which the former achieved by a life of laborious effort.

The language of Scripture on the fate of those who at their death are still imperfect, but none the less not deserving of eternal condemnation, is complicated by

the fact that there were, at the time when the books of the New Testament were being composed, several Jewish views upon the fate of the soul after death. One supposed that the soul passed immediately into a state of being in which it received the reward of its works, in the form either of partial happiness or partial misery. In this state it awaited the time when the Messianic kingdom would be established, when its happiness or its misery would be made complete. Another school of thought supposed a complete cessation of conscious life except in the case of a few persons of exceptional righteousness, until the establishment of the Messianic kingdom, when a general assize would be held at which all mankind would be judged according to their works.

These two points of view are reflected in the Gospels, in which, however, as is natural from the higher ideal of righteousness introduced by the teaching of Jesus, we have for the first time hints as to the distinction between the righteous, the imperfect and the wicked. Thus Jesus Himself speaks of sins which have no forgiveness either in this world or in that which is to come, and speaks of the unreconciled sinner being committed to a prison from which he will not be released until he has paid the uttermost farthing; again we have a distinction between servants who are to be beaten with few stripes and servants who are to be beaten with many. These are indeed rather hints than definite statements; St. Paul, who follows rather the view that the dead have no conscious existence until the day of the final judgment speaks of those whose work has been imperfect, (he is referring primarily to Christian teachers under the metaphor of the builders of the Temple of God); their work will be destroyed in the fires of judgment but they themselves will be saved, yet "so as by fire."

Now it is clear that the conception of the nature of a

life after death which takes the form of a complete cessation of conscious life until a day of final judgment of all men is hardly one which commends itself. In the period when St. Paul wrote, it was rendered easy by the general assumption that this day of judgment was imminent ; the only difficulty on the point was to explain the fate of Christians who died before it, since it was felt that the whole of the first generation of Christians ought properly to be alive to witness the second coming of Jesus and His triumph over His enemies. All our conceptions of the future life necessitate the view that it continues from the moment of death. The plane on which we exist is altered, but we can hardly conceive of an interruption of our conscious existence at death, which is followed by a sudden re-awakening to conscious life at some final day of judgment. Thus the view which seems to be implied in St. Paul's teaching of a sudden purification of the imperfect by fire at a future day of judgment can hardly be pressed in its literal form. In fact the tradition of the Church has always followed the other line. It has been generally taught that the soul is judged at the moment of death, and is admitted to a state corresponding to its life in this world. Those who have attained to such a degree of holiness that after the final purification involved in the pain of death they are, owing to the infinite merits of the death of Jesus on the Cross, worthy to be admitted to the presence of God, attain at once to the full happiness of Paradise. Those who died with their will fixed finally and irrevocably on the side of evil and against God, are condemned to that eternal misery which they have chosen. The vast majority of mankind fall into neither category. They have not finally and deliberately rejected God and chosen the side of evil ; but they are very far from having attained to perfect holiness. For them there remains the necessity of undergoing a process of purification and

perfection before they can stand in the presence of God. All moral progress is difficult and painful in a certain measure; and in the case of the departed it is the more so, since it is effected not by a series of voluntary acts,—for the life of freedom has ended at death—but by a process of cleansing inflicted by the will of God. The soul indeed accepts this process gladly; but its choice is not in the proper sense voluntary, since after death it is no longer in a position to choose evil; hence its progress is achieved by the external action of the will of God, not by the free moral choice of the soul. At the completion of the process they are worthy to be admitted to the full enjoyment of the vision of God.

There has been a certain amount of discussion as to the extent to which the suffering of souls in purgatory, as the state of purification is usually called, is to be regarded as the bearing of a punishment inflicted by divine justice, or how far it is simply to be looked on as a painful process of cleansing from sin. The question is not ultimately one of theology but of philosophy. It has been held that the only justification of the infliction of punishment is that it has a valuable effect in improving the character of the sufferer. On the other hand it has been held that the violation of the moral law demands the infliction of pain as a retribution for the act of violation. It is hardly necessary to press the attempt to solve this particular problem; but it is to be noted that while on Christian principles it is difficult for any man to claim that he has a right to inflict punishment on another as a mere vindication of the moral law, (for all men are sinners and their right to punish is therefore doubtful), it is not necessarily so with God. The divine justice can obviously claim a right to vindicate itself by the infliction of suffering on those who violate it, which human justice cannot claim.

The question of the life of the soul after death has been complicated by the fact that Christian theology has not wholly avoided the confusion produced by the absorption into it of the two Jewish views alluded to above. Thus it is commonly taught that while each soul is judged at the moment of death, there remains a final judgment to be held at the second coming of Jesus, when all mankind will appear before His judgment seat. At that final consummation the soul will be re-united to its risen and glorified body, and will enter into the final perfection of which humanity is capable. In the interval the soul will be immeasurably better off than it is in the present state in which it is united to its purely material body; but its final state of being in which the soul and the glorified body are united will be more glorious still.

It cannot however be denied that this account, originating as it does in two different traditions of Jewish thought, involves considerable difficulties. The conception of an interval after death in which the soul is separated from the body, and the subsequent re-union of the soul with a glorified body, seems ultimately to imply the belief in the re-union of the soul with a material body, which, although different in degree, is similar in kind to that which we know. Again if the insistence of Christian thought on the resurrection of the body is justified by the fact that it commits us to belief in the eternal existence of our whole moral and intellectual being, not a mere survival of some principle of personal identity divorced from all that makes us what we are, it is obviously impossible to suppose that the soul at death loses all its moral and intellectual characteristics and only regains them at some final judgment.

The solution would seem to lie in the fact that while human language is bound to speak of the state of the soul at death as if it continued to be subject to the laws of

time as we know them in this world, we have no reason for supposing that they do ultimately apply beyond our present state. It is perfectly possible that for the soul at death there is no longer any such thing as time, and that the process of purification through which it must pass should be measured by intensity rather than by duration. Further, it is perfectly possible, though inconceivable to the human understanding, that for every soul at death the final judgment is a present fact and that it is only as a necessary form of language for minds on the human plane of understanding that the Church has been allowed to distinguish between the particular judgment of the individual soul at the moment of death and the universal judgment of all men at the end of the world. In any case it must be remembered that in all these matters we are using the language of human metaphor to describe things which surpass human understanding.

The essential point is that the Catholic religion insists clearly on the distinction of the souls of the departed into three classes—the Saints in glory who have attained to perfect blessedness, those who are saved but still have a process of purification and perfecting to undergo, and those who by their own final choice of evil and rejection of good are irrevocably lost. Of these the first class have no need of the prayers of the Church Militant, for they have passed beyond all need of anything which by our prayers we might help them to gain. They have all and more than all that they could conceivably desire. The last class cannot profit by our prayers, for they have finally cut themselves off from God; since they have finally rejected Him, even His infinite mercy cannot help their condition. On the other hand we can by our prayers and good works alleviate the sufferings and render easier the purification and perfection of souls of the intermediate class, to which daily experience shows that the vast

majority of mankind belong. Naturally it is always possible that those for whom we pray may in fact stand in no need of our assistance, or may be incapable of profiting by it; but it is to be supposed that our prayers will none the less avail for others who can profit by them. In particular the pleading in the Eucharistic sacrifice of the atoning death of Jesus on the Cross must be the most efficacious method for assisting the departed; since in it Our Lord Himself applies His own eternal sacrifice for the forgiveness of the sins which at the moment of death stood between the departed soul and God.

NOTE.—There is at the present time a certain unwillingness to believe that a God who loved mankind so well that He was willing to die for it, shoulp allow a single soul to be finally condemned to everlasting misery. The objection is indeed in part due to an over-literal interpretation of the pictorial language as to everlasting fire in which the torments of the lost are described in the Jewish literature from which these conceptions are drawn in the New Testament. None the less the objection does in fact raise a real difficulty. But it is even harder to suppose that God, having given man free will, has not also given him the power to make the final choice of his will to rest on the side of evil and against the good. If so, it seems necessary to suppose that man has the power so finally to reject God, that there remains in him no ability even to desire anything but evil. Hence even the vision of the goodness of God will excite in him not love and sorrow, but hatred. In such a condition God Himself cannot benefit the sinner except at the cost of depriving him of that freedom to choose between good and evil which alone gives a moral value to any action. It has sometimes been held that there must be some further stage of probation beyond this life, in which the sinner, who in this life died impenitent, had a further chance of repentance. Unfortunately this suggestion does not solve the difficulty; for either in that future stage, man has still the free choice of good and evil, in which case he may persist in his choice of evil no less than he did in this world, or his freedom of will is removed, in which case his enforced acceptance of good and rejection of evil ceases to possess any moral value. It is indeed almost impossible to deny the possibility of final reprobation without denying the whole value of the New Testament, which teaches it almost as clearly as it teaches any doctrine. At the same time we have no means of knowing how many of those whom we

might suppose to be lost, may not have been saved from ultimate loss by a repentance at the last moment. In any case it is only those who have chosen evil as against good so absolutely that it is no longer possible for them to prefer good, even when they see it as revealed in the vision of God, that are finally lost. So long as any element of good remains, there is hope of ultimate salvation.

# Part IV

# The Church of England

# I

## HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS BEFORE THE REFORMATION

From the conception of the Church advanced in the preceding chapters it is clear that the whole conception of a " national Church " is in the strict sense a contradiction in terms. The Church is one and universal. Any religious body is either a part of that one universal Church, or else it has no real right to exist for the simple reason that it does not possess the divine commission to preach the Gospel and to administer the Sacraments which Jesus gave to His disciples and they transmitted to their successors. On the other hand the course of political development by which in Western Europe the Roman Empire, was overborne by floods of barbarian invaders, resulted in the creation of the national system of governments, with which we are at present familiar. (The shadow of the Empire did indeed survive for centuries, and it was able at times to exercise a powerful influence on contemporary politics ; in the end, however, it failed to assert itself as against the national system).

In the process the Church, as an ecclesiastical organisation, was of necessity brought into relation with the particular life of the various nations of Europe. In a civilisation where the acceptance of Catholic Christianity was universal, the influence of the Church on the national life was a factor which the most powerful monarchs were bound to recognise. Naturally they were primarily concerned with that part of the Church which lay within

their own territories, i.e. the archbishops and bishops who ruled in things spiritual the lands which they ruled in things temporal. In its dealings with temporal rulers the local ecclesiastical organisation was bound to gain a certain solidarity, which was increased by the fact that local peculiarities in the external details of religious worship tended to spread themselves over areas roughly coinciding with the newly formed nations.

Meanwhile the predominance of the Roman See in Western Europe was undisputed. It had indeed been recognised as holding a primacy of some sort over the whole of Christendom until in 1054 the jealousy of the See of Constantinople and a somewhat ill-judged attempt to assert the superiority of Rome had led to the great Schism between the Eastern and Western parts of Christendom. This did not affect the position of Rome in Western Europe. That position was however ill-defined, and at various moments the attempts which the Papacy made to extend its authority, or to use its position as a means for gaining financial support for the schemes of Papal policy or the needs of the Papal court, excited the vigorous opposition of the local ecclesiastical authorities. In this way the national solidarity of the Church in one particular kingdom made itself felt not only as against the temporal government of the State, but also occasionally as against the Papacy. The opportunities for the exercise of this national solidarity were rendered more frequent by the fact that the Papacy, which had at one time been able to dominate not only the spiritual but also the political life of Western Europe, declined from that position, but remained an important factor in international affairs on account of the great spiritual prestige which it enjoyed. Hence it was fairly often to be found supporting the claim of one particular monarch in a purely political quarrel, and naturally this

attitude might easily bring it into opposition with the ecclesiastical authorities of the regions which supported the claims of his rival.

In this way it happened that by the time of the Reformation the Church in Western Europe, although primarily conscious of itself as one, none the less was familiar with the idea that the ecclesiastical organisation of each country possessed a certain independent character of its own, and could on occasion take independent action either against the temporal ruler of the country or against the Papacy. It is plainly impossible to consider in detail the course of events which are known as the Reformation. It is only possible to consider summarily the main factors which contributed to it as they affected the Church in England.

In the first place it is necessary to remember that the Papacy had at the beginning of the sixteenth century fallen into the utmost discredit. It claimed very wide spiritual powers, but it was ready to use them to further the political schemes of monarchs who were willing to purchase its support. For a considerable period this had resulted in the setting up of rival claimants to the See of Peter, relying for their existence on the support of the national rulers who had established them. Although the scandal of the schism was ended in 1418, the Papacy had continued to act as a temporal power seeking to extend its influence by the ordinary means of secular diplomacy while at the same time claiming the widest spiritual prerogatives. In virtue of these it asserted its rights not merely to exercise a legitimate spiritual authority in matters of religion, but also to dispose of the rights of its subjects in many matters which would now be regarded as purely temporal. Its discredit was increased by the low moral tone of the Papal court—including in some cases the Pope himself—and the corruption which pre-

vailed in its exercise of the right of the Holy See to confer or confirm appointments to various offices in the Church. The claim of the Pope to exercise this right had led in the past to many controversies between the Holy See and the nations of Europe, particularly in the case of England; the ill-feeling was naturally increased when it was in fact exercised as a means of providing money for the upkeep of a Papal court whose morals were liable to be a scandal to the faithful.

Moreover, the Church itself had sunk to a very low level. The common practice of conferring high positions in the Church on ministers at the royal or the Papal court in return for purely secular services naturally resulted in the promotion of men who had little or no conception of their spiritual duties or responsibilities. The religious orders had decayed from their original zeal for holiness to such an extent that in the middle of the sixteenth century St. Ignatius of Loyola found great difficulty in obtaining the sanction of the Pope for his new society owing to the general discredit into which the older religious orders had fallen; it was being seriously considered at Rome whether it would not be advisable to prohibit them from accepting new members in order that they might thus die out from Christendom. Even where they had not become openly scandalous, they were often regarded as providing simply a comfortable retreat from the world. Their numbers had never recovered from the havoc wrought by the plagues of the fourteenth century, and their lack of piety was a general byword. The parish priests were sometimes men of real piety; but in many cases they openly neglected the law of the Church against the marriage of the clergy; in certain cases the Bishops connived at the contraction of irregular though more or less permanent marriages by their clergy. The morals of the laity were often of the lowest standard,

as was almost inevitable in view of the character of those whose duty it was to guide them by word and good example.

The piety of the age was often of a superstitious kind. This was not unnatural since in many instances the devotion of educated Christians had been seriously affected by the introduction of the New Learning, as a result of the restoration of the knowledge of Greek to Western Europe after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Among a considerable number of educated Christians this had produced a general disbelief in the Christian religion; its external worship was continued by men who derived their living and their importance from their ecclesiastical position, but the truths of Christianity were regarded even by some of these men as obsolete. The piety of the uneducated was largely wrapped up in devotions which could not, as they were popularly taught, stand the test of criticism in the light of the Holy Scriptures, which were now becoming more generally accessible. The general decay of morality had led in many cases to a conception of the Christian religion in which an external compliance with the rules of the Church as a means of gaining eternal salvation had replaced all idea of personal communion with Our Lord as the end of religion. Naturally where, as was often the case, the central authority of Christendom was prepared to use its right to guide the piety of the faithful simply as a means of increasing the wealth of the Papal court, belief in the value not merely of the particular works of piety which it commended for rather dubious reasons, but in all works of piety as such, began to decline. Inevitably religion declined also.

It is always a matter of some difficulty to adjust the religious teachings of an organised society to a new discovery of truth. It is always difficult for the individual

when exposed to new ideas to distinguish between what is essential in his religion and what is due to his own peculiar personal outlook. The task is still harder when a new movement of thought affects not merely an individual but a whole civilisation. Thus even at the present day organised Christianity is largely affected by the Darwinian doctrines of evolution and their proof of the impossibility of retaining the old belief in the literal historical truth of the early chapters of Genesis. The general indifference to religion of the less educated classes is due in a quite considerable measure to a vague belief that the Bible has been proved to be untrue. In the same way the rediscovery of the Holy Scriptures at the Reformation and the demand that they should be interpreted historically and not in accordance with the allegorical methods which had become conventional in the later part of the mediaeval period, led to a wide revolt against the generally prevalent conception of religion. There was a general feeling that Christianity meant personal access to God in the person of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the leading of a Christ-like life.

Many parts of the old system tended rather to hinder than to help in the attainment of these ends. Works of piety, which seemed to involve the acceptance of impossible legends or incredible miracles, or which seemed intended to bolster up a corrupt ecclesiastical organisation, or again doctrinal systems which were in some points plainly contrary to the teaching of Scripture could no longer be accepted. But reform is always difficult. It would have involved disturbing the faith of the simple and loyal supporters on whom the authorities of the Church could rely, in order to conciliate men who seemed to be turbulent innovators. The reluctance of the authorities to yield to the demands of the reformers naturally led them to increase the violence of their

demands, and to extend their condemnation of the existing system. Thus there seemed in the middle of the sixteenth century to be a probability that Europe would be divided between those who clung jealously to the purely mediaeval view of religion and those who demanded a reformation of the entire system of Christian teaching and worship, which would amount to an abolition of the whole Catholic system, as it had developed since the time of the Apostles.

Such in the roughest outlines were the conditions in which the movement known as the Reformation was effected in Europe. It must not be supposed that there was not a great deal of solid Christian piety, which was neither ignorant nor superstitious, which favoured reform but rejected revolution. But in England it found little chance of making itself felt.

## II

## THE REFORMATION

It must never be supposed that the leaders of the Protestant bodies at the Reformation aimed at establishing religious liberty. The demand that every man should be free to worship God after his own conscience only made itself felt as a result of the weariness produced by the religious wars of the seventeenth century. The object of the Reformers was to enforce on others the true religion, and to abolish the old superstitions. But the development of events showed that there was in fact little agreement among the Reformers as to what the true religion was, and what were the abuses to be destroyed. Hence the Reformation presents a bewildering chaos of movements, united in opposing the old system, but

willing to persecute one another the moment they were free from the common enemy. Fortunately we need not consider them in detail, since they did not succeed in gaining any permanent footing in the English Church.

The main importance of all these systems was their negation of the whole sacramental view of Catholicism. They had begun by questioning the more doubtful points of Catholic sacramentalism. Thus devotion to the relics of the Saints was excessive in its character, while the actual relics were in many cases of more than doubtful genuineness: from questioning these the Reformers had gone on to question the whole system of offering prayers to the Saints at all. In the same way they had begun by questioning the rather unscrupulous demands made for the offering of alms by the faithful for the repose of the souls of departed friends. These alms would often take the form of paying a fee to a priest to offer the sacrifice of the mass for some particular friend departed from this life; since the priest was expected to live in many cases by the offerings of the faithful it was not unreasonable that an offering should be made to him on the occasion when he said Mass for the benefit of the soul of a departed person by that person's surviving relatives. None the less the practice had led to a general prevalence of extortion. The dying might be terrified by lurid descriptions of the sufferings of souls in purgatory into leaving sums to the clergy for the saying of Masses for their souls after they were dead and the survivors might be exposed to similar extortions. Other pious works might be urged on the faithful for the object of obtaining forgiveness for their own sins or the sins of those dear to them; and those pious works might often be commuted into the payment of money to the clergy or to the upkeep of the Papacy.

Unfortunately these abuses led to a general denial

of the value of the Eucharist as a sacrifice in which the one sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross is pleaded for the particular needs of the individual Christian, and also to a denial of the belief that the prayers of the faithful can be of any benefit to the souls of the departed. Again the doctrine that the Eucharistic elements after consecration become in their essential nature the Body and Blood of Christ, though retaining the external characteristics of bread and wine, had been distorted in a good deal of popular teaching into a crudely material and superstitious belief, as though a miracle were wrought by the priest himself on the natural plane of existence. Once again the demand for reform passed into a rejection of the whole doctrine of the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Again, the tendency to suppose that the mere confession of sins to a priest and the receiving of absolution conveyed forgiveness of sins without regard to the disposition of the penitent led to a general denial of the authority of the priesthood to forgive sins in the name of Our Lord. The fact that the clergy had fallen into low esteem on account of their failure to live up to the high standard demanded by their vocation, and the exaggerated claims to supernatural power made by a certain amount of popular teaching led to a denial that they possessed any divine commission at all; they were represented as being simply the delegates of the congregation, appointed to lead them in public worship. Since for the most part the episcopate showed no disposition to side with the reformers, so that it would in any case have been impossible for them to transmit a valid succession of orders to the communities which they founded, the discovery was not inconvenient. The fact on the other hand that the clergy had neglected preaching, led to a grotesque exaggeration of this part of the sacerdotal office; the minister delegated by the

congregation also became the orator who supplied the congregation with the main element of its spiritual food.

Naturally in these and other changes the Reformers appealed to the Scriptures. The study of Scripture had been neglected by the mediaeval Church ; it was natural that the Reformers should exaggerate, not the importance of the Scriptures, for that is impossible, but the authority of the letter of the Scriptures. Naturally the refusal of the ecclesiastical authorities to accept their demands led the reformers to seek for a new authority which might be claimed in their favour ; they found it in the Scriptures. In practice indeed the authority of Scripture meant the right of the individual reformer to put what interpretation he saw fit, on whatever passage he chose to select, and to use it as the authority of scripture. They were thus able to reject the whole system of ecclesiastical authority as it had developed since the days of the Apostles. The new authority was accepted with more readiness on account of the obvious corruptions and abuses in which the old system was involved ; it provided a ready means of escape from a hierarchy which needed reforming from top to bottom, and it seemed that an ecclesiastical order founded on the Scriptures could never be exposed to the danger of falling into the worldliness and corruption which had invaded the old.

The demand for reform was strongest in Switzerland and Germany. The Reformers, however, were not content to deny particular doctrines or to demand remedies for isolated abuses. The Continental leaders put forward completely new doctrinal interpretations of the Christian religion. But the systems of the reformers rapidly showed that the attempt to base Christian doctrine on the Scriptures alone could only end in the production of a number of rival systems, each ready to persecute its rivals. None the less the various systems of the age possessed in com-

mon a firm insistence on the truth that the essence of Christianity is the personal communion of the human soul with Our Lord Jesus Christ as the revealer of God and the redeemer of man. Their insistence on this vital truth was, however, marred by the fact that it was bound up with entirely new doctrines, based for the most part on over-emphasis or misunderstanding of certain elements of the teaching of St. Paul. For instance Luther sought by a quite arbitrary process of interpretation to identify St. Paul's condemnation of the Jewish Law as a system of mere external rules with a denial of the value of all works of piety and acts of devotion as such. He saw rightly that such works have no value if they we performed as a mere compliance with rules and left without any relation to faith in Our Lord ; but he overlooked the fact that they possess the utmost value not merely as an expression of that faith, but also as a means for training and developing it. He proceeded to urge that faith alone makes man righteous ; he who has faith is acceptable to God through the merits of the death of Christ and is made righteous by it ; he who has not faith is not and cannot become righteous. This was indeed a perfectly accurate interpretation of much of St. Paul's teaching ; for St. Paul, having at his conversion experienced a sudden sense of deliverance from the burden of sin which oppressed him in the days when he sought to obtain righteousness by the observance of the rules of Judaism, often argues as though the mere fact of conversion inevitably confers on the Christian a righteousness in virtue of which he becomes henceforward incapable of sin.

Similarly Calvin, on the strength of passages in which St. Paul endeavours to grapple with the undoubted difficulties involved in combining a belief in divine omnipotence with the freedom of the human will, arrived at the monstrous belief that in fact the righteousness of

man is entirely independent of any consent of man. The righteous are those whom God has foreordained to salvation and delivered from the guilt of original sin, in which all men are born, by a free act of divine mercy. To these men he gives grace to live righteously; the remainder are reprobate, and created with no purpose but to increase the glory of God by suffering eternal punishment. The righteous enjoy that personal communion with God which Jesus died to secure for them; it is bestowed on them by a divine gift of conversion. Those to whom that gift is not given can do nothing to avoid that damnation which all have deserved. The defence of the system is that it is entirely logical and coherent, and that it is in fact a perfectly legitimate interpretation of certain elements of Pauline teaching.

In this latter system, which had most effect on English religion, and which prevailed in Scotland, the Sacraments naturally play little part. They are indeed means by which God conveys grace to the soul, so far as Baptism and the Eucharist are concerned—for these alone are regarded as Sacraments, the others not having been instituted by Our Lord Himself in their actual form—but only for the elect who are predestined to eternal life. In others they have no effect. The Catholic tradition of worship, and the accessories of worship, which by their beauty express and enhance the devotion of the faithful, are rejected as superstitious. In so far as any formal public worship is retained—for it is to a large extent replaced by extempore prayer and preaching—nothing is allowed which might assist the soul to raise itself to God, for fear lest such external things should in fact end by diverting it to themselves. Naturally such a view found much acceptance in an age when the externals of religion had in fact been allowed to a considerable extent to obscure its real purpose.

Before considering the historical development of the Reformation in England, it is necessary to notice certain points attacked by the Reformers in the traditional practice of Catholicism, in respect of which it is not easy to decide how far the right lay on the side of tradition or on the side of the Reformers. The importance of these points lies in the fact that they are still to some extent a matter of dispute among those who are prepared to accept the main outlines of the Catholic tradition.

In the first place the failure of the clergy to live up to the standard of celibacy led to a demand for the toleration and recognition of clerical matrimony. It is somewhat remarkable that the reformers who appealed to the authority of Scripture should have had the hardihood to deny that the celibate life is by both Our Lord and St. Paul regarded as the ideal state : but it must be recognised that in this respect they could at the moment claim with some show of justification that the attempt to enforce celibacy had often failed in practice, since a certain number of the clergy practically lived in the married state, while others would have given less scandal to the faithful if they had substituted a permanent, though officially unlawful, union for their numerous irregularities. Here it may be added that the Reformers in denying the value of celibacy went on to deny the whole conception of the religious life, devoted to prayer and the service of God. The religious orders had indeed in many cases fallen from their high estate ; the life of a religious society was often devoted to selfishness, not to prayer and Christian charity or the pursuit of Christian learning. Hence the Reformers invariably sought to sweep away the institutions which embodied the Christian ideal, and at the same time lost sight of the ideal standard of Christian poverty and devotion to prayer and good works, which it had been the duty of the religious orders

to embody in a concrete form. The result was a general tendency to acquiesce in a moderate standard of Christian piety and respectability in the place of the ideals of the Gospels. None the less it must be admitted that at the moment the abolition of the compulsory celibacy of the clergy could claim some justification as a means of avoiding graver evils.

The demand for the reform of public worship inevitably raised a demand for the use of the vernacular language in the services of the Church. The history of the practice by which the Latin language came to be the universal language of public worship is curious. In Western Europe Latin was in the days of the greatness of the Roman Empire the universal language; England was before the Saxon invasions a Latin-speaking country; the native tongue survived, but the forces of civilisation were tending to destroy it. Throughout the period which intervened between the Saxon invasions and the Norman conquest it was inevitable that the Church should look upon Latin as the language of Christian civilisation, while the native tongues of the barbarians who overran the West of Europe were the languages of idolatry. As the invaders developed into civilisation they found in Latin a language which could be used for the purposes of commerce and public life far more readily than their own ill-developed dialects; Latin became the language of written intercourse, while other tongues retained their place in common speech. In England in particular as the result of the Conquest Latin was the common language as against the Norman French of the invaders and the Saxon English of the conquered. The extent to which a knowledge of Latin of a rudimentary kind was diffused is shown by the fact that it was normally used by the bailiff of a quite small estate as the language in which his accounts were kept. It was only towards the end of

the fourteenth century that English became under the influence of Chaucer and Wyclif a literary language common to all classes of society. From this time onwards the general knowledge of Latin began to decline. Hence it was natural that a demand for a vernacular liturgy should arise. But it has since been found that in fact the use of Latin for liturgical worship was by no means indefensible. For the Catholic, prayer does not primarily consist in a literal following of certain forms of words recited by the minister, but in the lifting up of the soul to God; and experience has shown that the use of a hieratic language will in the case of many people excite a sense of awe and reverence which is a positive assistance to prayer, while the enforced verbal attention to a vernacular liturgy may have the opposite effect. On the other hand ability to follow the exact words of the liturgy is to many a great assistance to worship. It must be recognised that in this respect the reformers could plead a considerable element of reason in their demands, the more so since the faithful who desired to follow the exact words of the Liturgy could not at the time procure books which would enable them to do so.

Owing to the difficulty of giving Holy Communion to the faithful from the chalice without considerable danger of irreverence, it became the practice in the Western Church to give the Holy Sacrament in one kind only to all communicants, the celebrant only receiving communion in both kinds. The defence of this practice lies in the fact that it does undoubtedly make for convenience and reverence in the giving of communion to the faithful. The objection to it lies in the fact that Our Lord at the Last Supper gave the Holy Sacrament in both kinds to His disciples. The Reformers naturally insisted on a return to the giving of communion in both kinds, which had of course been for centuries the practice of Christendom.

The importance of these points lies in the fact that they are matters in regard to which there is at present considerable difference of opinion. English Catholics for the most part tend on the last two points to adhere to the practice of the Reformers, though there is a certain reason to doubt whether they will continue to do so permanently. The consideration of this point belongs however to a later chapter.

NOTE.—I am aware that the statements advanced above as to the extent of the failure to observe the rule of the celibacy of the clergy in the period immediately preceding the Reformation will be criticised as untrue to the facts. For the subject is one on which there has grown up a controversial mythology similar to that which surrounds the figure of St. Peter. Catholic controversialists have endeavoured to minimise the extent to which the rule was neglected in practice, while Protestants have (in the case of controversialists of the lower class) delighted in emphasising and exaggerating the scandals which did undoubtedly occur from time to time. Consequently it is very difficult to arrive at a just estimate. Both arguments are really irrelevant. The question is not one which can be argued from the failure or success of the rule in some past period. The most that could be proved from a long list of scandals would be that the Church imposed her rule in the matter prematurely: for modern experience proves that a celibate priesthood is perfectly practicable without scandals. Thus the whole question of the extent to which the rule was observed or neglected is really negligible; it could only prove that in an age of a deplorably low moral tone the rule was widely neglected. In the same way the fact that we meet with failures in the earlier periods of the history of the Church proves nothing; at most it proves that the rule of the Church represented an ideal to which the priesthood has only succeeded in corresponding in the course of centuries. The question of whether the rule is in itself a good one or not is quite separate. That the unmarried state is preferred by the teaching of the New Testament could hardly have been doubted, if it had not been distorted by the Reformers for controversial ends; and since experience proves that the rule is practicable, it becomes difficult to see how it can be denied that the imposition of on the clergy is entirely justified.

## III

## THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND

In England the Reformation took a peculiar course. Protestant ideas imported from the Continent found a certain acceptance in England in the early years of Henry VIII on account of the generally prevalent corruption in the Church. But they made no considerable progress until Henry found the Pope unwilling to concede his demand for a divorce from his first wife Katharine of Aragon. The right to grant the divorce lay with the Pope as the supreme authority in spiritual matters ; and though Henry's demand was entirely unjustified, it was one which the Pope would not have hesitated to grant, but for the fact that he was more afraid at the moment of Henry's father-in-law than he was of Henry himself. Henry proceeded to repudiate the claim of the Pope to be head of the Church. Instead he claimed for himself the headship of the Church in England. The claim was not so monstrous as it sounds, since in fact monarchs had often in fact exercised a very wide measure of authority over ecclesiastical matters by appointing their own nominees to the highest ecclesiastical offices and guiding the deliberations both of local synods of the Bishops of their realms and Councils representing all the Bishops of the Church. It must be remembered that for a considerable period the Pope himself had lived at Avignon where he was practically subject to the dictation of the King of France. In fact Henry's action amounted to a denial of the necessity of any visible head of the Church on earth and claimed for the temporal ruler the right to

decide on the appointment of the Bishops and higher ecclesiastical officers of the Church, and to regulate through them the details of ecclesiastical practice so far as his own realm was concerned. Henry insisted on the retention of the old doctrinal system of Catholicism, though indirectly he did much to undermine it by conniving at the introduction of foreign adherents of the new teachings of the Reformers in order to embarrass the Bishops when they showed signs of resenting his claim to supremacy. The first step which he definitely took towards the general overthrow of the old system of religion was the dissolution of the monasteries. His excuse for doing so was the alleged scandal caused by the dissolute lives of the religious houses. The evidence against them was very largely invented by his agents; at this date it is almost impossible to say how far the scandals were based on any element of truth, though there is little doubt that the monastic system had at the time fallen very far from the monastic ideal. It seems, however, that although often worldly and confortable the members of the great orders were not as a rule positively vicious. Many no doubt were men of very high sanctity. The wealth of the monastic houses largely went to the king's ministers and the nobility which had grown up at the Tudor court in the place of the old aristocracy that had perished in the Wars of the Roses; only a small part went to the Crown. The effect of this was far-reaching; from this moment there was an influential party which was pledged to resist any reconciliation between England and the Holy See for fear that it might be asked to restore its ill-gotten spoils.

It was this party which controlled the court of Edward VI after the death of Henry. It proceeded through the agency of Crammer, the Archbishop of Canterbury, to introduce an English Liturgy. Cranmer in the first

instance put forward in 1549 a Prayer-book closely modelled on the old Liturgy with the omission of a large number of Saints' Days and the introduction of a certain number of verbose exhortations to the faithful modelled on those beloved by Continental Protestants. Meanwhile affairs in Europe were tending against the Reformers, and a number of them fled to England for fear of persecution. They exercised a strong influence on the court and the Archbishop in favour of a more thorough Reformation. The result was that in 1552 a new book was issued, which marks the extreme point ever reached by the English Church in the direction of the adoption of Protestantism. In particular it omitted the words "The Body (or Blood) of Our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life," substituting for them the words which now form the second half of the words of administration of the Holy Communion in the Book of Common Prayer; the words by themselves seem deliberately to inculcate the view that the Eucharist is simply a memorial of the Passion of Our Lord, and to deny that the Eucharistic elements are in any sense the Body and Blood of Christ. The book in fact was scarcely ever in use, for Edward was succeeded by his sister Mary almost at the moment when the enforcement began.

The general public, which was heartily opposed to the innovations of the court in matters of doctrine and worship, hailed her accession with delight. Unfortunately Mary by her Spanish marriage alienated the affection of the nation. Her attempts to put down the growth of Protestantism by persecution were in fact no more barbarous than those of Henry VIII; but they came into conflict with a growing sense of humanity, which had not hitherto been felt. The new doctrines were so widely accepted that her attempts to extirpate them

had to be conducted on a scale which shocked public opinion; moreover it was generally supposed that they were due to Spanish influence, and they were therefore resented by national patriotism. In addition to this her attempts to revive the religious houses naturally excited the apprehensions of those who had enriched themselves at the expense of the religious orders under her father; there was general uneasiness among the wealthy classes as to the prospect of a demand for general restitution.

Thus at Mary's death Catholicism was no longer generally popular, as it had been at her accession. Elizabeth was at heart a Catholic; but her religion was not likely to lead her to risk losing the Crown. At her accession she attempted to establish a compromise between the old system which Mary had restored and the Protestantism of the reign of Edward VI. Her first attempts failed owing to the refusal of the Catholic Bishops of Mary's appointment to accept a modified form of the royal supremacy which several of them had accepted under her father. She proceeded to deprive them of their offices and to substitute new Bishops consecrated by the form contained in the Prayerbooks of Edward VI. The consecration was performed by the few Bishops who were prepared to accept the new settlement, the actual consecrator being a certain Barlow, who had been Bishop of Bath and Wells under Henry VIII and Edward, had acted as an assistant Bishop on several occasions in the reign of Mary—for he seems to have been willing to comply with any system of religion, a fact which did not enable him to retain his diocese in Mary's reign, but saved him from the fate of the more conscientious reformers—and became under Elizabeth, Bishop of Chichester. The effect of the refusal of the Marian Bishops to support Elizabeth was to force her to rely far more than she would herself have been inclined to do on the clergy who defin-

itely adhered to the Protestantism of the Continent, particularly to the doctrines of Calvin. Her object was to gain so far as possible the consent of the whole nation for her settlement of religion. With this end in view she adopted the Prayerbook issued in 1552, but inserted a few changes which seemed slight in themselves, but in fact altered its whole doctrinal balance. As a specimen it may be noted that she restored to the words of administration of Holy Communion the phrase, "The Body (or Blood) of Our Lord Jesus Christ which was given (or shed) for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life," thus restoring by implication the belief that the Eucharistic elements become at Consecration the Body and Blood of Our Lord. Officially the old Catholic vestments were to be used at Mass.

Although the new order in religious matters seemed in externals still to favour the Protestants, it none the less retained just those points which Protestants resented, as implying the retention of those doctrines which they particularly disliked. In point of fact very few of the parochial clergy followed the example of the Marian Bishops in refusing to accept the new order. The recognition of the royal supremacy which Elizabeth demanded was very much modified from that exacted by her father—it was confined to supremacy in things temporal "so far as the Law of Christ doth allow." For a period of ten years it remained uncertain whether she would not marry a Catholic Prince and succeed in gaining Papal recognition both for the religious settlement which she had established, and also—a point which she regarded as of far more importance—for the legitimacy of her claim to the English Crown. It must be remembered that as the daughter of Anne Boleyn, she was not unjustifiably regarded at Rome as an illegitimate daughter of Henry VIII, whose divorce from Katharine of Aragon was not recognised by the

Church. In the confused ideas of the time the Pope claimed not merely the right to decide in matters of divorce, but also to award the crown of any country to the claimant whom he judged to be legitimate. At the end of ten years of tortuous negotiations carried on by agents whom either side was free to disown at any moment, Pope Pius V issued a Bull in which he not only pronounced Elizabeth to be a heretic and the supporter of heretics, but also declared her to be illegitimate, deprived her of the Crown of England, and excommunicated all who supported her. He claimed to do so in virtue of the divine right of the Papacy to establish and depose temporal monarchs. It is necessary to remember that this action, with its definite assertion of rights which the Papacy has long since abandoned as untenable, constitutes the formal separation between the English Church and the rest of Western Christendom. Naturally the effect was to weaken Elizabeth in her attempt to enforce the more Catholic interpretation of the Prayer-book, which she herself favoured.

None the less she and the more orthodox English theologians never wavered in their claim that the whole intention and result of the settlement introduced at her accession was not to establish a new religion based on Continental models, but to retain the old Catholic faith apart from certain mediaeval superstitions and the corruptions which had grown out of the extension of Papal authority. In attempting to estimate the justice of this claim it is necessary to remember that the spheres of temporal and ecclesiastical authority were very ill-defined. It has already been noted that the formal breach between the English Church and Rome is based in the Bull of Pius V on the right of the Pope to depose heretical monarchs. Similarly the action of Elizabeth in deposing the Marian Bishops might seem an intolerable interference on the

part of the temporal power with the rights of the Church ; but it must be remembered that such actions on the part of Catholic sovereigns were by no means unheard of at the time. William the Conqueror had in 1070 made extensive alterations in the English Episcopate simply in order to substitute a Norman for a Saxon hierarchy ; he had also nominated Normans at his pleasure to fill up vacancies in the episcopate as they occurred.

Thus the claim of English Catholics that they are part of the one Catholic Church is not one which can be settled by the mere comparison of the action of Elizabeth with modern conceptions as to the proper relation of the temporal and spiritual powers. The sphere of both authorities was ill-defined, and both were continually endeavouring to encroach on the jurisdiction of the other. The claims of Elizabeth were as indefensible as those of the Pope ; they were not more so. Similarly it is not possible to decide the question whether the Elizabethan settlement was in fact a purification of religion from superstition or the establishment of a new one by a comparison of the modern Roman system with the Protestant interpretation of the teaching of the Prayer-book which has often been widely current in this country. For the Roman system has been reformed since the accession of Elizabeth to meet the abuses which did in fact clamour for redress. The Elizabethan claim was put forward to meet a need which the action of the Roman Church in the last three centuries has by implication admitted. The question at issue is whether the reforms of Elizabeth formally committed the Church of England to the introduction of new doctrines or the rejection of any part of the faith of the Catholic Church, and whether her action in introducing those reforms through the local episcopate of England can be regarded as a deliberate act of secession from the Catholic Church.

## IV

## CATHOLICITY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

In the long controversy between Anglicans and Roman Catholics which has continued from the Reformation to the present day, numerous reasons have been alleged against the claim of the former that they are in fact within the one Holy Catholic Church. Anglicans have always been handicapped by the fact that they make no claim to be to the exclusion of all other religious bodies the one true Church. Any Anglican view is bound to admit that the Church is externally divided, and that the Church of England is only one part or branch of the whole Church. Anglicans are bound to deplore the fact of the external division; but they have never claimed that all other bodies are outside the Church.

Against this claim Romans have the advantage of a clear-cut logical system Unity consists in being in visible communion with the Roman Bishop as the successor of St. Peter to whom Our Lord gave a primacy over the rest of the Twelve Apostles. They are thus able to point to a visible centre of Christian unity; and at the same time the modern developments of Papal authority make it easy to supply an apparently authoritative answer to any question of controversy that may be raised at any given movement. This power of giving a clear and authoritative answer on any given point has a strong appeal in an age when many questions of Christian doctrine and Christian morality are being questioned. As against this the Church of England has never claimed the right to speak with final authority on any point

of controversy. At most her Bishops can express an opinion which may possess the authority due to the fact that it is the opinion of a large number of Christian Bishops ; it cannot claim to be the voice of the whole Church. Her ability to do as much as this is lessened by the fact that she has ever since the days of Elizabeth included a large party which definitely looks on the Reformation as a rediscovery of primitive truth overlaid by the radically false development of the Catholic tradition. Although this element has in fact little or nothing in common with the almost forgotten doctrinal systems of the great Protestant Reformers, it clings to their claim that the Bible alone is the final arbiter of truth in matters of faith, and rejects a large part of the sacramental system of Catholicism. During the past century the English Church has also been largely influenced by the tendency to abandon the fundamental doctrines of Christianity which has followed from the abandonment of the belief in the literal truth of every sentence of the Scriptures. There has thus grown up a considerable school of thought which sees in Our Lord no more than a man of a peculiar and unique insight into divine truth, but not in any sense God. Since this school of thought has mainly been recruited from the Protestant party within the English Church, it lays little emphasis on the sacramental system. The presence of these rival parties in the English Church naturally renders it a difficult matter for the Anglican episcopate to express a corporate opinion on any matter with any degree of clearness or authority.

On the other hand these drawbacks only show that in fact the existing state of affairs is very far from perfect, a fact which any English Catholic is bound to recognise ; they do not disprove the Anglican claim that the English Church is part of the one true Church. The decision of

that claim depends finally on the question whether unity depends on being in visible communion with the Holy See. If that is necessary, all Anglican claims fall to the ground. If it is not, it remains to ask whether the proceedings of Elizabeth and her Bishops at the time of the Reformation were such as to constitute a formal act of secession from the Catholic Church or to involve them in formal heresy, or whether the attempt to carry on a Catholic hierarchy failed through some technical defect in the consecration of the Elizabethan Bishops.

In regard to the first point we have seen that the claim that Catholic unity depends on visible communion with the See of Peter involves the somewhat difficult assumption that the Eastern Church has since the year 1054 been outside the fold of the one true Church. In view of the fact that that Church has preserved the Catholic life and the Catholic religion intact for so many centuries in the face of almost continual persecution, it is difficult not to regard the claim with some suspicion. We have seen further that there is in fact a fatal objection to the claim to make visible communion with the Holy See in all cases the one test of Catholic unity. For the centre of Catholic unity has itself been divided during the period of the Schism in the West, when two rival claimants to the See of Peter, the rival Popes of Rome and Avignon, each claimed to be the one true successor of St. Peter and excommunicated all who supported the claims of their opponent. Thus it has to be admitted that there was a period of some forty years when it was impossible to solve the question of unity with the Catholic Church by the test of unity with the Holy See; for there were two Holy Sees not in communion with one another. Thus our suspicions of a theory of Christian unity which excludes the Eastern Church from the Body of Christ are amply confirmed. It remains to consider whether

the Elizabethan settlement by itself constituted an act of schism or a definite adherence to heresy.

In regard to the first point it is necessary to observe that the English Reformers in fact always maintained the opposite. They never formally separated themselves from Catholic unity. They merely claimed the right to repudiate the jurisdiction of the Papacy and to reform the religious system in this country from certain superstitious accretions. Their rejection of all Papal jurisdiction may seem at first sight rather like a deliberate act of secession from the Church; for the jurisdiction of the Pope was generally admitted in Western Europe. But against this it must be pointed out that the Papal claims were vitiated by the exaggerated form in which they were habitually put forward. The Papacy did not merely claim jurisdiction in spiritual matters; it did not even end with the exaggerated claims of the mediaeval Papacy in regard to the right of appointing Papal nominees to ecclesiastical positions in England. It covered a far wider region, since it was extended to include the right to decide as to the succession to the English Crown in spite of the fact that Elizabeth had been accepted by the nation without opposition; it must be remembered that the decision of the Papacy was influenced by the fact that the English nation refused to be bound by the claim that the newly discovered countries of the West belonged to Spain in virtue of a Papal gift. Thus it follows that if the Elizabethan settlement went too far in its entire rejection of Papal jurisdiction, it was driven to do so by the equally exaggerated claims put forward by the Papacy in matters in which, as would now be admitted, the Holy See had not the smallest right to interfere. When it is remembered that the formal act which marks the rupture of negotiations between the English Church and the Papacy is a Bull which claims for the Pope

the right to depose Elizabeth, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the action of the Holy See was vitiated by its attempt to enforce an authority which it had no right to exercise.

In regard to the doctrinal settlement of the Elizabethan period, it must be admitted at once that on the surface their statements, as embodied in the documents of the period, bear a strongly heretical appearance. They were intended to do so, in order that they might conciliate the strongly Protestant feeling of that part of the nation on which Elizabeth was forced to rely at the time of her accession. But on closer examination it has always been found that they are so worded as to be capable of several interpretations, a loophole being left which renders it impossible to bind them down to a formal acceptance of the new doctrines of the Reformers or a formal denial of Catholic teaching. The nearest approach to such a rejection of Catholic doctrine is the condemnation of Transubstantiation ; but here we are dealing with a doctrine only formally laid down after the Schism between the East and the West, and it is abundantly clear from the records of the time that the Elizabethan settlement was not intended to repudiate the universal belief of Catholics in the presence of Our Lord in the Eucharistic elements, but only a doctrine which was at the time liable to be interpreted in a misleading and superstitious manner. For the rest of the doctrinal statements of the Elizabethan settlement, it has been repeatedly shown that they cannot be proved to commit the English Church to formal heresy, and in many cases that the natural interpretation is the Catholic one. In several cases the habitual Protestant interpretation of them can be shown not to be that originally intended by the Reformers, and to be possible only in virtue of a strained and unnatural construction of the words. The

whole matter has been investigated in many books dealing with the subject, notably in the famous "Tract XC"; for a fuller discussion of the point the reader is referred to these works.

Similarly it has been repeatedly shown that the doubts thrown by Roman theologians on the validity of the steps taken at the accession of Elizabeth to secure the transmission to her newly nominated Bishops of the authority given by Our Lord to His disciples are ungrounded. The main objection to the whole Roman attack on Anglican Orders is that it has continually shifted its ground. In the first instance it was supposed that they were invalidated by the omission of a particular ceremony of the Roman rite, the handing to the newly ordained Priest of a chalice and paten, accompanied by words conveying to him authority to offer sacrifice for the living and the dead. Later investigations have, however, shown that this ceremony was unknown in the Catholic Church until the tenth century A. D. Subsequently it has been urged that Barlow, through whom the old orders were transmitted to Parker, the Elizabethan Archbishop of Canterbury, was never consecrated at the time of his appointment to the see of St. David's by Henry VIII, or that Parker himself was never formally consecrated by the English rite for the consecration of Bishops. In spite of a recent attempt to revive the former of these two fables, neither need be seriously considered. The condemnation of Anglican orders by Pope Leo XIII rests on the theory that it is necessary that any form of consecration or ordination should express the intention of conferring the power to offer the Eucharistic sacrifice, or at least that this intention should be made clear in the form of prayers used in conferring Holy Orders; but any such claim involves the invalidity of orders recognised as valid even by the Roman Church. For fuller informa

tion on this point the reader must again refer to special treatises. It is sufficient to say that the Elizabethan documents clearly announce their intention of preserving the old orders of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, and that there is no tenable ground for denying the adequacy of the Anglican Ordinal as a means for doing so.

Thus it is claimed by English Catholics that there is no reasonable ground for denying the claim that the Church of England is in fact within the unity of the Catholic Church. Hitherto however we have been considering the purely formal grounds on which for the most part the discussion of the matter has turned in the past. It is doubtful in fact whether anything is gained by a discussion which concerns itself purely with this aspect of the question. All such discussions tend to foster the view that the Catholic religion is a matter of complying with formal conditions and obeying external rules. It is of course nothing of the kind. The Catholic religion is a life, and its rules are merely means for securing to the believer the means of enjoying that life; for that life is a gift from God, and it can normally only be received by the means that God has appointed. The function of the Church is to provide the faithful with the means of living the Catholic life. Where in fact a religious society does provide them, and has that divine authority without which it is incapable of providing them, there is the Holy Catholic Church, except in so far as the society in question has deliberately separated itself from unity with the rest of the Church and has thus cut itself off from all right to convey to its members the divine life which Our Lord bestows upon the members of His Body. Where in fact we find that divine life manifesting itself, and where the claims of the society in which it is manifested are not demonstrably untenable by all Catholic principles, it is only reasonable that we should conclude that the fact

of the power to produce the Catholic life is a sufficient reason for accepting the claims of the society which produces it to be within the one true Church.

As an incidental confirmation of this argument, we may notice that the reason why English Catholics who have seceded from the Anglican communion in the past have been led to take this step has normally been despair of the power of the English Church to produce the Catholic life. This was the reason for the secession of Archdeacon Manning, later Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster. They have mistaken local defeats for a general repudiation of Catholicism by the English Church. The mistake was often natural in the circumstances of the time; in the succeeding chapters we shall trace the course of events which shows them to have been in fact mistaken.

## V

## THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND BEFORE THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

During the reign of Elizabeth the higher positions in the Church were largely occupied by men who had been refugees on the Continent in the reign of Mary. They had been influenced by the Protestantism of Calvin, and many of them were anxious to complete the work of the Reformation by a complete introduction of the Calvinist system. The ecclesiastical history of the time is mainly concerned with the vigorous attempts of Elizabeth to insist on the maintenance of a minimum standard of Catholic practice and teaching against the attempt of a number of Bishops, supported by some of the leading courtiers and a small, but noisy, section of the general

public, to introduce the continental Protestantism generally described in English history as Puritanism. In the seventeenth century, however, the position was altered. The weight of learning and devotion in the English Church was on the side of those who held to the definitely Catholic view of religion, believing in the divine authority of the Church of England in virtue of its claim to be part of the one true Church, and maintaining the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice and the Eucharistic Presence, and recommending the use of the Sacrament of penance.

Although in many points this movement was strongly opposed to the claims of the Holy See, it was in fact very largely influenced by the great revival of Catholicism on the Continent in the latter part of the sixteenth and the early part of the seventeenth century. For the tide of Protestantism, which had at one moment seemed destined to sweep over the whole Continent of Europe, was suddenly checked. In 1550 it might have been supposed that the Catholic religion depended for existence on the armed forces of a few Catholic monarchs, whose zeal for the faith depended on political motives rather than on any genuine zeal for religion. By 1600 an amazing outburst of Catholic piety and Catholic learning had entirely altered the position. It does not fall within the scope of this book to trace the history of the movement, sometimes described as the Counter-reformation, but more properly to be regarded as the application by the Catholic Church to itself of the remedies demanded by the first reformers for the abuses which had crept into the Church during the preceding centuries, and the adjustment of the mediaeval view of religion to the outlook of the new age.

The reform of many of the worst practical abuses was carried out by the Council of Trent; the preaching of the

Gospel as the essence of all true religion was substituted for the old acquiescence in a formal system of works of piety with no real foundation of Christian faith and Christian devotion ; and with the recklessness which has always marked the Catholic religion in times of renewed zeal, missionaries had been sent out from Europe where the Catholic Church seemed hardly able to defend herself from her enemies to fight the powers of darkness in the recently discovered lands of the East. Thus although there was little change in the external forms of religion there had in fact been a complete transformation of spirit in the Catholicism of Europe. The change did not make itself universally felt at once, for it was very largely the work of men who during their lives influenced for the most part only those circles with which they were in personal contact. The extent of the change may be estimated by a consideration of particular details. The mediaeval conception of religion laid great emphasis on the value of the offering of the sacrifice of the Mass by the Priest, but the laity communicated only on a very few occasions during the year, usually only at Easter. External works of piety were highly esteemed, but meditation and the higher forms of mental prayer were scarcely practised at all. Devotions to the Saints, particularly to local shrines and local relics occupied a large place in popular religion and devotion to the person of Our Lord tended to take almost a secondary place. The ecclesiastical hierarchy from the Pope downwards seemed to be occupied in secular matters, and to care little or nothing for the maintenance of religion. (It must of course be remembered that this is only a very general account of the defects of religion at the close of the mediæval period, when the piety and devotion which had marked the religion of the thirteenth century had passed away).

In the seventeenth century Catholicism has been

transformed. Frequent communion is commended to the faithful as a means of achieving that personal union with Our Lord which it is the purpose of the Sacrament to bestow upon the Christian. The religious life of the monastic orders is being renewed by the teaching of mental prayer by the great contemplative writers of the time, whose works are still the classical authorities in this branch of Catholic devotion. The secular clergy are being raised to a higher conception of their duties, in particular by emphasis on their duty to offer the holy sacrifice frequently as the great means for growing in grace and preserving them from forgetfulness of their vocation. The value of external works of piety is being recognised as dependent on the devotion of those who perform them, or on their power to produce such devotion where it does not already exist. The honour and reverence due to the Saints is being purified from the more superstitious beliefs and practices which were tolerated by the ignorance of the earlier times, but could only be an offence when the spread of learning had shown their inconsistency with the true conception of the Christian faith. Naturally it is not to be supposed that the old abuses were swept away at once. But a new life had suddenly manifested itself in the Church just when it seemed at the point of death, and Catholicism had not merely checked the spread of Protestantism but had actually recovered much of the ground that had been lost.

The same spirit animated the great English theologians of the seventeenth century. Decency and order were restored to the worship of the Church, the Sacraments were administered with considerable frequency, and public worship recovered from the general neglect into which it had fallen under the Elizabethan Bishops. There was a wide recovery of the practice of prayer and the use of sacramental confession. The movement was

indeed hampered by the fact that there was a strong body of Protestant opinion within the Church of England, which still longed for a thorough reformation on the Continental model. For the moment indeed this party seemed to triumph, when the military genius of Cromwell overthrew the King, who had himself been a faithful supporter of the Catholicising movement. But a brief experience of Puritan domination was enough to disgust the nation; and at the Restoration the Catholic cause was stronger than ever.

It continued to flourish until the end of the reign of Anne, in spite of the fact that many of its ablest and holiest men had refused to take the oath of allegiance to William III, and had seceded from the Church of England rather than do so. During the reigns of the four Georges, however, it declined in importance. The reasons of this decline of the Catholic tradition are in the main two. In the first place the Catholic element in the Church of England was suspected of favouring the attempt to restore the Stuart dynasty to the throne, and "High Churchmen," as they were usually called, even apart from those who seceded rather than accept the oath of allegiance to William III., were in general excluded from the higher positions in the Church. In the second place there was a general decay of faith among the more educated classes in Western Europe. The growth of scientific knowledge had created a general disbelief in the claims of revealed religion, and even those who were supposed to be its accredited teachers had little faith in the truths they were expected to defend. Once again it must be remembered that the decay of faith in Christianity was not peculiar to England; it was equally noticeable in the educated classes of France, where the higher clergy at the beginning of the French Revolution were scarcely better than the prelates of England. The external

organization of the Church was as powerful as ever; but among those in high places there was little faith and less devotion. There was a great deal of genuine piety in the country; but in high places little could be found. The only notable services rendered by the Bishops of the time to the Christian religion are learned defences of its reasonableness as a system of philosophy or a basis of a rather conventional morality. The age witnessed indeed the vigorous attempt of Wesley to revive personal religion; but the Anglicanism of the time could find no place for his devotion and his followers seceded from the Church to form a new religious body of their own.

Within the Church religion underwent a startling decline between the middle of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. Public worship was almost neglected, the chief positions in the Church were regarded as prizes for the influential clergy, who frequently held a number of highly paid benefices at the same time. The Sacraments were seldom administered and no attempt was made to secure any external decency or order; the Sacrament of penance was almost allowed to lapse into oblivion except among the dwindling remnants of the High Church party. It was commonly assumed that the Protestant interpretation of Anglican formularies was the correct one, though the one aim of the Protestant reformers, to secure the personal unity of man with God as revealed in Our Lord, was no longer regarded as the end of religion. If indeed religion had any object, it was simply to act as a basis for the public observance of morality and the suppression of the more blatant forms of vice which were repudiated, in theory at least, by the conscience of the age.

It is necessary to emphasize the fact that this general decline of religion, and the decay of Catholicism in particular, were not merely the culmination of a slow pro-

cess of decay. There is abundant evidence to show that Catholic devotion flourished among wide classes of society for a period of seventy years after the Restoration; the decline began to be noticeable about 1750, and was accomplished with startling rapidity. It would have been disastrous in any age; but unhappily the age was not an ordinary one. It was marked by a great outburst of new ideas and by a transformation of the whole organisation of society. In the realm of ideas it was marked by the liberal revolt against the whole system of privileged classes and orders, and the insistence on the equal rights of all men as such to complete freedom in all spheres of thought and action. The revolt culminated in France in the Revolution, which regarded the abolition of the Catholic Church as a small but inevitable part of its programme. In England the effect of the movement was not to sweep away the organisation of the Church but to leave it utterly discredited as a mere part of the general system of privilege established for the benefit of the English oligarchy.

During the same period the face of society was changed by the Industrial Revolution. In the middle of the eighteenth century England apart from London was an agricultural country; and the external organisation of religion was more or less adequate to the needs of the population. By the opening of the nineteenth century huge industrial regions had grown up, for which no religious provision existed except the parish Churches built to serve the needs of the small populations of the villages and country towns of an earlier generation. In the new towns enormous populations lived in unspeakable squalor, and entirely cut off from the ministrations of a Church which hardly cared to minister either to their spiritual or their bodily needs. The horror of their condition was intensified by the widespread collapse of trade

after the Napoleonic wars. The Church was discredited in the eyes of the learned by her opposition to all liberal ideas, and in the eyes of the poor by her utter lack of sympathy with their miseries and her comfortable neglect of the teaching and example of the Master she professed to serve. It seemed merely a question of a few years before the growing tide of liberty must inevitably sweep away the Church, together with the rest of the system of aristocratic privilege of which it had been the bulwark.

## VI

## THE RELIGIOUS REVIVAL OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

It is always the darkest hour which precedes the dawn ; and the moment when religion seemed nearest its death-bed was in fact the moment of its revival. It must be remembered that the Catholic movement which will be considered in the next chapter was in fact only one out of several which all resulted, in their various ways, in a restoration of interest in religion when it seemed on the point of perishing. Although Catholics are bound to criticise the shortcomings of these movements, in so far as they failed to grasp the full implications of the Christian revelation, yet they had in fact an important influence on the Catholic revival.

The first of these was the evangelical movement. This movement was an attempt to recover within the Church that element of personal devotion to Our Lord as the basis for a life of Christian holiness, which had been excluded from it by the opposition of the Bishops to the followers of the Wesleys during the preceding century.

Its strength lay in its vivid grasp of the importance of the Atonement as the centre of the Christian life—the impossibility of pleasing God except in virtue of a divine gift of grace which man could do nothing to earn, but which was freely given through the merits of the death of Jesus on the Cross. This inspired the leaders of the Evangelicals with a burning love for their Master, and an ardent longing to bring souls to Him. In virtue of that love they laboured unceasingly and successfully for the salvation of others, and for the abolition of those evils which were an obstacle to the propagation of the Gospel. They succeeded in securing the abolition of the slave-trade, they accomplished through the agency of the Church Missionary Society an amazing work for the conversion of the heathen, and they laboured continually and successfully for the religious, moral and social improvement of the condition of the poor in England. Their weakness lay in their lack of a really solid theological basis. Their appeal was primarily to the emotions, through which they laboured to produce "conversion," by which they often meant little more than a sudden access of emotional enthusiasm, as the result of which the sinner was led to turn from sin or indifference to a struggle to attain to Christian holiness. But where they failed to produce this outburst of enthusiasm, or where, as might easily be the case, its effects were merely transient, they had little to offer; for in fact they tended to suppose that such a conversion was the necessary foundation of the religious life of all Christians. None the less they had a great influence on the whole religious life of England. They were entirely content with the forms of worship left by the Reformers as the authorised worship of the Church; for their own specific view of the Christian life did not depend very much on any forms of worship. By supplementing those forms with sermons and hymns of a

suitable character they could achieve their objects within the frame of Anglicanism.

Their lack of a systematic theology was not at first apparent ; for at the beginning of the movement they shared with the Church in general the belief that the Bible, as a verbally inspired Book, provided all the theology needed. In fact this conception of the Bible meant the selection of certain texts which favoured their view of religion ; these were emphasized as the basis of all doctrine and the rest were explained away. They had a considerable devotion to the Eucharist, as being in some sense a special means for communion between the soul and the person of Jesus ; but they shared the general prejudice of the beginning of the nineteenth century against the traditional doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church. The result was that after a period of unpopularity, due to the hostility of the Laodicean bishops of the time to an outburst of enthusiasm which was a standing protest against the religious lethargy that had allowed them to attain to the high places of the Church, the Evangelical party came to be regarded as a normal element in the life of the Church of England. They demanded no great innovations, they were clearly zealous and devout, often indeed saintly, Christians. Hence they were able to exercise a wide influence in favour of a revival of genuine personal religion in circles which often had no idea that they were listening to anything specifically evangelical. Their early enthusiasm remained, indeed, peculiar to the straitest followers of the movement ; but the general tone of serious personal religion, and real, though rather unintelligent, devotion to the sacrament of the altar, which was characteristic of much Anglican religion during the latter part of the nineteenth century, may be largely traced to the influence of the evangelicals.

Evangelicalism however had no weapons to meet the difficulties that the nineteenth century was to bring forth. It originated in the atmosphere of the preceding century when the Bible was taken for granted by all but a few unbelievers who could be dismissed as pestilent atheists. The nineteenth century produced the great movement of thought in every branch of human life which is known as Liberalism. We are not concerned with it except in so far as it affected religion. It did so in two principal ways. In the first place it attacked religion from without. The scientific progress of the time revealed the untenability of the Bible history of the creation of the world as a piece of history. Since the scientists were for the most part convinced materialists and hostile to all belief in supernatural religion as such, they claimed that the discoveries of science were in fact a deathblow to the Christian superstition. In the second place a school of theologians, professedly Christian, claimed that the investigation of the Scriptures by the critical methods usually employed for the investigation of history proved the untenability of the old view of their verbal inspiration. They advanced reasons for doubting the historical character of many parts of the Old Testament and the accuracy of many of the historical books, and for rejecting the received tradition as to their authorship. Furher they pointed out that the same methods when applied to the New Testament yielded similar results. They claimed to find inconsistencies in its narrative, and evidence that some of the books of it were in fact the work of forgers of the second Christian century. The result of their criticisms was to produce a general tendency to question the whole basis of Christian theology; for the Liberal critics were largely dominated by the materialist philosophy of the time and they sought by the application of their methods to establish a non-miraculous Christian-

ity, in which Our Lord furnished a supreme example of human perfection, but nothing more, except in so far as human perfection is in some sense a revelation of God. In England this movement of thought did not advance with any rapidity to the more extreme position which the German theologians adopted. But it caused a general unsettlement of accepted beliefs, which the opposition of the orthodox evangelicals and the Catholics of the revival did nothing to meet. (The liberal movement in regard to the Scriptures in England hardly assumed serious proportions until the Catholic revival had been at work for some years). For the answer of the orthodox of both parties was in fact simply one of obscurantism. The critics were invariably rash in assuming that the latest discovery was an infallible revelation of truth, when often it could be shown to rest on quite unfounded assumptions; their work was filled with innumerable inconsistencies and contradictions. (As a curiosity it may be observed that one German theologian reduced the genuine books of the New Testament to four Pauline Epistles, and condemned the rest as spurious; he was followed by another, who by the application of the same methods of criticism gravely claimed to demonstrate that those four Epistles were also spurious and left no genuine books at all!) For a considerable period Evangelicals and Catholics were content to resist the work of criticism by pointing out its failings and inventing quite untenable explanations in support of the orthodox case. The result was to create a general sense of insecurity. It was believed that religion rested on the Bible: and the Bible was being exposed to a serious attack, in which the defenders were generally seen to be having the worst of the argument. For although they might explain away one particular difficulty, it was felt that they had not succeeded in meeting the general attack of criticism,

which was that the Bible, if treated like the rest of ancient literature, appeared not as a verbally inspired Book but as a set of composite human documents, with many mistakes and inconsistencies.

The attack was met by the development within the Church of England of a school of liberal theologians, who, in spite of many shortcomings, did in fact save the Church from the growing belief that it was merely clinging to an exploded superstition. Their line of defence, in itself the only possible and legitimate way of reconciling traditional Christianity with the new discoveries, was to attempt to distinguish between the essentials of Christianity and the various beliefs which had grown up around it and had been wrongly assumed to be part of it. Their weakness lay in their readiness to accept a materialist philosophy as the final revelation of truth and to reject all that seemed inconsistent with it. Hence they rejected not merely certain untenable elements of the Scriptural Testament narratives and their traditional interpretation, but much that was vital to any real acceptance of Christianity as a full and final revelation of God to man. They had no sympathy with the traditions of Catholicism, sharing the English prejudices in which they had been educated; and they lacked the element of personal belief in the Atonement which was the centre of Evangelicalism. Hence they tended, and still tend, to regard Our Lord as a merely human figure, a supreme pattern of humanity, but not divine. The effect of this tendency is to raise the further question whether it is possible to claim Him as a supreme pattern of human perfection, and whether other great religious teachers must not be permitted to rank beside Him; and whether, too, His moral teaching can be regarded as final where it conflicts with the conceptions of a more "progressive" age.

None the less the liberal movement in theology was at

the outset associated with a high ideal of personal service for others based on the example of Jesus, and contributed much to the formation of the type of religion generally prevalent until recent years in the great public schools and universities. This was not, however, its main service to religion. Its main service lay in its demand that Christianity should not be bound up with a traditional belief in the verbal inspiration of the Bible and the acceptance of the historical truth of mythical narratives. It demanded that the Bible should be tested by the standard of scientific investigation which is generally applied to the sources of ancient history, and made to stand or fall on its own claims to inherent truth, not on the acceptance of ecclesiastical tradition. (It is necessary to remember that the Protestants at the Reformation, while claiming to reject ecclesiastical traditions which were not compatible with Scripture, were in fact relying on a traditional belief in the infallibility of the letter of the Bible which the Bible itself does not warrant).

The result has been that while certain generally accepted beliefs have been shown to be untenable, the general structure of the Catholic tradition has been strengthened. The historical character of the New Testament story has been in the main vindicated: although it is possible to reject it as untrue, it is entirely unwarrantable to say that such a rejection is justified simply by the application of critical methods of investigation to the New Testament. In particular it is continually becoming clearer that such an application supports the general Catholic conception of religion as against that of Protestantism.

NOTE.—The earlier Liberal movement in the English Church was associated with such men as Charles Kingsley, Frederick Denison Maurice and Dr. Arnold of Rugby—to a lesser extent with Temple, later Archbishop of Canterbury, who subsequently tended to a more

orthodox position. These men never formed one united party: but it was from the combination of the enthusiasm for liberty in religion and social reform with the leading positions in the Public Schools of the modern type, which these names represent, that the now decaying "Public School religion" of a large number of Englishmen arose.

## VII

## THE CATHOLIC REVIVAL

The year 1833 witnessed the birth of the third great religious movement of the century, which was destined, as Catholics believe, to recover for the English Church her true place in Christendom. There had always been a remnant which clung to the seventeenth-century tradition of a Catholic interpretation of the formularies of the Church of England; but by this date it seemed to have dwindled to a small minority of men, learned but out of touch with the life of the age: it was usually known as the "High and dry" party.

In this year it reappeared in a form which was by no means dry. A group of the younger fellows at Oxford, remarkably alike for their learning, their brilliance, and their high personal sanctity, came forward to proclaim against the vague Protestantism which dominated English religion (for the Evangelical movement had scarcely emerged from its unpopularity) the truths of the Catholic religion. They emphasized the cardinal doctrines of the Incarnation and the Atonement with all the ardour of the Evangelicals and with far more learning; they proclaimed the sacramental system of the Catholic Church as the divinely appointed means by which man has access to God; and they insisted that the Church was not a kind of department of the State for the preserva-

tion of sound morality on a vaguely religious basis, but the living representative of God on earth appointed to preserve and proclaim the truth revealed by Jesus Christ and inspired by the abiding presence of God the Holy Ghost, superior to all temporal authorities in so far as its doctrines and discipline was concerned. Above all they taught that religion was not morality based on a dim supernatural sanction but the vital communion of the soul with God as revealed in Jesus Christ, a communion bestowed through the sacraments and prayer and impossible without a continual struggle to attain to personal holiness. The strength of the movement lay in its solid basis of Christian doctrine and the austere piety of its leaders. Its method of appeal lay partly in the sermons and the personal intercourse of the leaders with the members of the University of Oxford, but mainly in the issue of Tracts setting forward some particular aspect of Christian doctrine or practice. (The Catholic revival in its earlier stages is thus known by the two titles of the " Oxford " and the " Tractarian " movement).

The strength of the Revival and the rapidity of its success were startling ; its stability was not less so. This may be gauged by the fact that in spite of the early death of one of the original leaders, Richard Hurrell Froude, and the staggering blow caused to a movement which had always disclaimed " Romanising " tendencies when Newman left the English Church in 1843, it still continued. His departure indeed wrecked the prospect that the movement would become the dominating power in the University of Oxford, then even more than now the centre of religious life in England ; but the Revival had such vitality that it survived the loss of one who combined the learning and holiness of Pusey, the other figure of dominating greatness in the first period of the revival, with the personal charm of Keble and Hurrell

Froude. In the public eye Pusey stood alone after the departure of Newman; and there is no token of his greatness so striking as the fact that in spite of the loss he did not despair of the restoration of Catholicism in the English Church.

None the less the movement ceased with Newman to be primarily academic; its operations were transferred to the parishes of the English Church. In them it necessarily assumed a new character. Hitherto it had appealed to the learned; it was now to appeal to the general public, more particularly to the ignorant multitudes which were congregated in the poorest quarters of the great industrial cities of England. (It must be remembered that the conditions in these districts at the present day are such as to appal those who witness them for the first time; yet during the past seventy years they have been improved beyond all recognition by the persistent labours of public authorities and the devotion of private individuals). Now it was natural that in appealing to the youth of Oxford the Tractarian movement should be content with an insistence on Catholic doctrine and Catholic piety, and care little for external things; for its audience could appreciate the implications of its teaching without the help of such accessories. The clergy, who outside the University furnished the largest body of readers of the Tracts, were in a similar position. Hence by the providence of God it was possible for the Movement to establish itself on a firm foundation of Catholic doctrine and Catholic piety before it made its appeal to the world. But so soon as that appeal was made, it was found that the mere teaching of doctrines by oral means to audiences unversed in theology was of little effect. The English are the least theological of nations; and it was possible to preach the most advanced doctrines (so long as a few controversial catchwords of

the Reformation were avoided) without exciting any apprehension that the doctrines so taught were anything new or important. Hence it was necessary to appeal to other means of proclaiming the Catholic faith. Naturally the disciples of the Tractarians had recourse to the use of those external ornaments and ceremonies which the Catholic Church has used for centuries as the expression of her devotion and the means of inculcating her doctrine on her children. The movement did not change its character; it was still firmly founded on Catholic doctrine and Catholic holiness; but it began to restore the accessories of Catholic worship as the natural and inevitable means for expressing and fostering the devotion of those who would have been but little influenced by its intellectual appeal in the form of oral teaching.

## VIII

## THE RITUALIST MOVEMENT

Thus in its second stage the Catholic revival assumed a new form, which may be described as the "Ritualist" movement. Those responsible for this change did not of course care for matters of external ritual or ceremonial as such, but only for the doctrine and the devotion which they symbolised. The first attempts to introduce ritual were indeed regarded with some distrust by Pusey and the survivors of the early leaders of the Tractarian group; but their distrust vanished when they saw that the Ritualists cared no less than they did themselves for the essential truths of the Catholic religion; thus Pusey during the whole of his life remained the dominating figure in the new phase of the Movement of which he had at one moment been somewhat frightened.

The phase of the Catholic revival which we are now considering corresponds more or less with the last half of the nineteenth century. The correspondence is indeed very rough; the Ritualist movement was beginning to develop even before the departure of Newman; while on the other hand in many parts of England it has had only a very small influence up to the present day, while in many parishes Catholics are still contending for those points of teaching and practice which were the objectives of the early Ritualists. Similarly there were at a quite early period in the movement parishes in which the original objectives were won fairly rapidly, and in which the struggle passed from the objectives of the Ritualist period to those for which English Catholics as a whole are now contending. None the less it may be said that there is a certain distinction between the points for which those of the second or Ritualist period contended and those which are at the present time the principal objectives of the movement as a whole. It has been seen that the Tractarians were primarily concerned with the restoration of the fundamental principles of Catholic doctrine and practice as the true interpretation of the formularies of Anglicanism and the true conception of religion, and that their work during the earliest period was mainly carried on in the sphere of academic controversy; it aroused vigorous hostility, but that hostility was mainly confined to more or less learned and official circles. It is now necessary to examine more closely the objects for which the Ritualists fought.

The side of their work which undoubtedly attracted most attention was the external side, the introduction of the accessories of worship which had always been customary in the Catholic Church. The points on which the struggle was waged most hotly were the Eucharistic vestments, the lighting of candles on the altar, the use of

wafer-bread instead of ordinary bread, the eastward position of the celebrant and the mixing of water with wine in the chalice at the Mass and the use of incense. It must always be remembered that these points were demanded or opposed not on the ground that they were pleasing or unpleasing, but on the ground that they were symbols of the doctrines of the presence of Our Lord under the outward appearance of bread and wine and the Eucharistic sacrifice as against the generally prevalent Protestant conception that the Eucharist was simply a memorial meal to keep in the minds of Christians the Passion of Our Lord and their fellowship with one another.

The attempt of the first Ritualists to introduce a surpliced choir and the wearing of the surplice by the preacher had already excited violent opposition, when the restoration of these more distinctly Catholic practices was attempted. It was at once assumed that they were illegal innovations, and their suppression was demanded with clamorous indignation. But here a curious obstacle arose. A rubric of the Elizabethan Prayer-book definitely ordered that the use of vestments, the lighting of candles, and some other points of Catholic usage which had been universal before the Reformation should be retained. It would seem that Elizabeth hoped to be able to preserve their use at the time of her accession, though in point of fact the feelings of Protestants in London and the Calvinistic leanings of many of her first Bishops rendered her unable to insist on more than the wearing of the surplice at Mass. At the Restoration this Rubric had been maintained ; yet although a substitute for the proper Eucharistic vestment, known as the cope, had survived in certain Cathedrals, no attempt had been made by the Caroline bishops to revive those elements of Catholic practice which the Elizabethan rubric enjoined. It would seem that no memory survived of what the rubric really meant.

None the less the fact remained that in some at least of their innovations or restorations the Ritualists had the Law on their side. At the same time the position was complicated by the fact that in theory they rejected the view that the Church could be bound by the laws of the State. But it was only as interpreted by the principles of English statute-law that their claim had any value. For it is a generally recognised principle of ecclesiastical law that the letter of a written law must be interpreted by custom, and where a long custom to the contrary can be shown to exist, the letter of the law ceases to possess any force. This principle is not, however, recognised by English statute-law. Thus the position arose that the Ritualists could appeal only to the principles of a law which they did not recognise ; the ecclesiastical authorities on the other hand, who relied on the statute-law which ordered the use of the Prayer-book, found that it enjoined some of the very practices they were most anxious to suppress. The difficulty at first was not clearly seen ; the Ritualists did not enquire too closely into the exact nature of the law which supported their case, while at the outset the judges who were called on to enforce the law were too convinced of the traditional Protestantism of the last century to consider the possibility that it did not represent the original intention of the Reformers.

These accessories of religion were only intended to emphasize the doctrines as to the Eucharist which had been revived by the Tractarians. They were accompanied by the attempt to revive the essential practices of the Catholic life. Thus the Mass, with the adornments we have been considering, and accompanied by singing and the traditional ceremonies of High Mass, was made the principal feature of Sunday worship. Celebrations were also provided at an earlier hour in order that the faithful might have the opportunity of observing the Catholic

rule of fasting before communion, and Masses were also provided on weekdays, even though there were no communicants. The observance of the fasts of the Church ordered in the Prayer-book was also revived. With this recovery of Catholic practice went the teaching of the sacrament of penance, long neglected in the Church of England, though it had been fairly freely taught and used until well after the end of the seventeenth century. Here again a howl of fury was raised when it was suggested that sacramental confession was necessary or even desirable; the clamour was particularly raised against a translation by Pusey of a Catholic guide for the use of Priests in hearing confessions, which necessarily dealt with the right method for assisting the penitent to overcome sins against the virtue of purity. The use of sacramental confession was in fact clearly recognised as legitimate by the Prayer-book, but it had become practically obsolete during the century preceding the Catholic revival, and it was therefore resented as an unfamiliar innovation; it was moreover bound to be an unpopular one in an age which regarded a rather self-satisfied respectability as the ideal of Christian virtue. Thus its restoration was bound to excite opposition, which was intensified by the fact that Pusey's translation of a work of Catholic moral theology dealt necessarily with those forms of sin which the literature of the Victorian age ignores or only mentions in the most careful and allusive manner. It should be added that the use of confession was contrary to the whole scheme of evangelical theology, which presupposes a life based on a dramatic act of conversion, which is so effective as to leave no room for lapses into serious sin. There was thus a violent resentment on the part both of evangelical piety and of the comfortable righteousness of the general body of Anglican opinion against the suggestion that the sacrament was

needed in order to enable the Church to save the souls of those who were sunk in sin ; but the opposition entirely failed to prevent the growth of a regular use of the Sacrament of penance, either as a cure for serious sin or as a means of advancing in Christian perfection.

While however the opposition to the Ritualists mainly centred round particular points of doctrine or practice, the real basis of the hostility lay deeper. They were in fact engaged in the attempt to restore the true ideal of Catholic holiness as against a standard of conventional morality. It was felt that their religion was something alien to the life of the English nation, just as it had been felt that the devotion of the evangelicals was something alien. The average Englishman had no real belief that religion meant the consecration of the whole of life to the service of God ; to the Ritualists as to the Tractarians, this was a self-evident fact. The whole Sacramental system of the Church and the external adornments of religion were means for assisting him in the work of self-consecration or for giving an outward expression to the fact of self-consecration. It was this whole attitude to religion which really aroused in the first instance the opposition of the mid-Victorian public ; but it was this attitude to religion which also secured the final success of the Movement.

The statement may sound paradoxical, but it is none the less true. For under all the clamour against the restoration of Catholic teaching and practice there lay a deep antipathy to a conception of religion which implied the condemnation of the generally accepted point of view. But that antipathy, when faced with the lives of the Ritualists, was bound to give way to admiration. It is true to say that it was the religious life of the movement that was the cause of its triumph. That life manifested itself in various ways. In the first place it rendered

necessary the restoration of the "religious life" in its proper sense of a life which surrenders all worldly advantages and wealth in order to devote itself to the service of God either by means of prayer or of active service of others. It is one of the many evidences of the greatness of Pusey that, at the very moment when the loss of Newman seemed to have wrecked the movement, he was preparing his plans for the first establishment of a religious community of women, who were to devote themselves to the life of Sisters of Charity among the poorest classes. It was inevitable that in the conditions of the time the first revival of the religious life should take the form of active devotion to works of mercy, though naturally such a life was based on a life of prayer. The step led to a violent outcry from the noiser element of Protestant opinion; but the opposition could not endure. The life and labour of the early Sisters of Charity was a silent condemnation of their critics. The course of the Movement witnessed a wide extension of the restoration of the religious life, both among men and women; among men it assumed for the most part the form of communities of mission Priests, among women of communities of Sisters of Charity. It would be difficult to say how much of the final victory was due to the patient and unseen labour of the women, who devoted their whole lives to poverty and hardship in order to minister to their Lord in the person of the poor and the outcast for whom He died. None who had any knowledge of their work could deny that God was with them.

A more obvious and dramatic effect of the Catholic revival was the restoration of the Catholic ideal of the priesthood. Hitherto the Anglican clergyman had been anything but a priest. His religious duties had consisted mainly in conducting services and preaching sermons setting forth a sound morality and the duty of acquiescing

in the existing order of things. He naturally hoped that long and diligent service would be rewarded by due preferment. He had often been a benevolent patron of the deserving poor, and he had usually set a reasonably high example of personal morality. Many indeed had been grossly negligent of all their duties except the performance of the external functions of their profession, such as the conduct of public worship; some had neglected those, or even been men of notoriously scandalous life. The majority, however, had tried conscientiously to live up to the comparatively low conception of their vocation then generally current; but it had never occurred to them that there was anything amiss with that conception. An exception must be made in favour of the early Evangelicals who always displayed a fiery zeal for the conversion of souls; but they tended to regard themselves as ordinary Christian laymen called to bring men to salvation, who happened also to have been appointed as ministers to conduct the worship of the faithful.

Naturally the revival of the Catholic conception of the Priest as the appointed representative of Jesus Christ, whose duty it was to consecrate his whole life as a continual oblation of prayer and sacrifice for the salvation of the souls to whom he was sent to minister, and to make it a constant witness to the revelation of the Gospel in the person of Jesus was revolutionary. No less revolutionary was the conception that he was the appointed representative of the people for whom he was bound to plead continually before the throne of God. The conception was fiercely resented. In some points indeed it could not be criticised, as for instance in the Tractarian practice of reciting the divine office of "Morning and Evening Prayer"; for this was a duty plainly ordered by the Book of Common Prayer, though it had fallen into almost complete disuse. The frequent offering of the Holy

Sacrifice with no communicants but the Priest was, however, more easy to attack; and one of the main reasons for attacking the external adornments of Eucharistic worship was the feeling that they implied a new conception of the priestly character. Equally obnoxious was the claim that the Priest was the normal and proper channel for conveying the divine gift of forgiveness of sins. Both functions of the priestly office were felt to imply something new in the priestly character.

On the other hand while it was easy for the ignorant to deride and abuse the Ritualist clergy, it was not so easy for those who had ever had any personal experience of their life and work. Even Tait, Bishop of London and later Archbishop of Canterbury, the protagonist of the official opposition of the Bishops to the revival, hesitated to proceed against men who were quite clearly labouring more devoutly and more effectively for the salvation of souls than any of the rest of the clergy. In the long struggles of the latter half of the nineteenth century, the obvious devotion of the Ritualist clergy, their high standard of personal piety, and their willingness to face any form of persecution rather than to abandon the practices which were the outward expression of their teaching, were the main obstacle on which all attempts to suppress the movement suffered shipwreck. The basis of that life was the Catholic ideal of the priesthood, especially in the form in which it had been developed by the Saints of the Counter-Reformation. Once again it was Pusey who began the work of familiarising the English clergy with their writings. The external side of the priestly life manifested itself in the recitation of the Divine Office and the frequent use of the sacrament of penance. By these means principally the Ritualists raised a standard of priestly devotion which could bear comparison with any period of the history of the Catholic Church.

A similar but less contentious revival of the religious life was effected among the laity. By the inculcation of the frequent use of the Sacraments, the observance of the discipline of the Catholic Church, and the regular use of prayer, the Ritualists won to their side a large following of devout men and women who were at all times the backbone of the Revival. They were often regarded as eccentrics by their friends; often indeed they had to face all the trials of petty domestic persecution; the poorer followers of the revival had indeed often to bear even more serious persecution both in their homes and in the factories where they worked. Once again it was the manifest power of the teachings of the Ritualists to produce a spirit of devotion among the laity that stayed the hands of their opponents. The importance of the laity cannot be over-estimated: but since it did not figure largely in controversy, it does not call for fuller treatment here.

It is impossible to record in detail the confused history of the Ritualist movement. Never did a cause seem at its outset so hopelessly condemned to utter failure. It was condemned by the Bishops with absolute unanimity. A few, such as Wilberforce of Oxford and Philpotts of Exeter, sympathised with the doctrines of the Tractarians, though they were by no means enthusiastic supporters; but they, no less than the rest of the Bishops, condemned all attempts to teach, by the appeal of the external adornments of worship, the truths which the Tractarians had maintained in writing. A few other Bishops were men of strong liberal opinions, who while they condemned alike the doctrines of Tractarianism and what they were pleased to regard as the puerilities of Ritualism in religion, none the less felt themselves debarred by their principles from using their official position to put down any movement of thought, however violently they might distrust or

despise it. The majority of the Episcopate did their utmost to support the Archbishops in the suppression of Ritualism: they were zealously supported by Lord John Russell and Disraeli, two of the great figures of the Parliamentary life of the time. The third of the great statesmen of the age, Gladstone, was indeed strongly Tractarian in his sympathies, but he did not sympathise with anything but the most moderate Ritualism. He could not prevent the passing of a special Act of Parliament intended to crush the movement; but the imprisonment of a little handful of disobedient Priests was sufficient to break down the whole machinery of the new law. Of the religious leaders of the time many who were inclined to sympathise with the original Tractarian movement hesitated to give more than a qualified support to a cause which seemed to them to endanger the whole future of the Catholic revival in England by exciting public hostility not merely against Catholic externals but also against Catholic doctrine. The growing influence of the Evangelical movement was directed to its overthrow; it was led by Lord Shaftesbury, a man whose force of character and burning zeal for righteousness was strong enough to rescue the children of England from the worst forms of industrial oppression in the teeth of the opposition of the great manufacturing interests; he broke the opposition of the capitalists, but he could not break Ritualism. The opposition of the Evangelical leaders was supported by the ignorant fury of Protestant mobs, inflamed by the rhetoric of the lowest class of agitators; at the outset the police refused to preserve the Ritualists from the mob or the magistrates to convict the rioters whom they arrested. The Liberals despised and disliked a movement which stood for a theory of authority in the Church which condemned their whole method of thought; even though they hesitated to support the clamour for

the suppression of Ritualism on the ground that Liberal principles are incompatible with the forcible suppression of any form of thought, yet they were not likely to show much energy in resisting the measures which others demanded.

Nor was external opposition the only obstacle which the movement had to face. Among its followers and even among its leaders were many who, at some particular setback of the cause for which they had laboured, despaired of the prospect of restoring Catholicism in the English Church and submitted to the Roman Communion. It was within a decade of the first beginnings of Ritualism that Henry Edward Manning, Archdeacon of Chichester and later Cardinal-Archbishop of Westminster, left the Church of England. Within the movement, too, there were divisions. Some favoured a far wider measure of conformity to Roman custom than others, and the disputes of the more " extreme " and the more " moderate " sections caused a considerable waste of energy. Similarly some who feared the accusation of " Romanizing " yielded to the ready temptation to indulge in violent attacks on various points of Roman doctrine and Roman practice ; here again it may be noticed that Pusey, though often urged by his friends to clear himself of suspicion by attacking the Roman Church, stedfastly refused the opportunity of earning in this way a cheap popularity, in spite of the fact that there were many points of Roman teaching and practice which he genuinely regarded as erroneous.

None the less, in spite of opposition from without and divisions within, there was no room for doubt that by the end of the nineteenth century the attempt to put down Ritualism had failed. It might still be uncertain, as it is still uncertain to-day, exactly how far the Catholic revival would go in the adoption of the more recent developments of Catholic doctrine in the Roman Church

and of the more recent developments of Roman devotion ; but it was no longer open to doubt that the Ritualists had established their claim to the full right to a standard of Catholic teaching and practice which represented far more than the first leaders of the movement had ever dreamed of. In general it may be said that they had won full liberty for the use of such external adornments of worship as the Eucharistic vestments, altar-candles, incense, and the general accessories of the Eucharistic worship of Western Catholicism ; and with these went the right to teach the doctrine of the Eucharistic presence of Our Lord and the Eucharistic sacrifice. They had established the right of the clergy to teach the necessity of the Sacrament of Penance and of the faithful to demand the benefit of absolution. Although a large majority of the Episcopate might frown on their practices, and although for the most part the leading Ritualists were debarred from the higher preferments of the Church, it was certain that they could not be prevented from the full exercise at least of these elements of teaching and practice, together with some other less hotly contested points of practice, without a final disruption of the English Church. It is true that the amount of progress made varied widely in different parts of the country ; in many places congregations still vigorously opposed the introduction of the least element of Catholicism, but the ground already firmly gained was too great for any question of the general suppression of Ritualism to be a practical issue.

## IX

## THE MODERN PHASE OF THE CATHOLIC REVIVAL

From its earliest stages two distinct tendencies have made themselves felt in the history of the Catholic movement. One tends to emphasize the continuity of the movement with the history of the English Church since the Reformation and to cling more or less closely to the authorised forms of Anglican worship, interpreting them in the most Catholic sense which they are able to bear. The other has always tended to find its inspiration in the devotional life and literature of the Catholicism of Western Europe as it has developed since the Reformation, and to regard loyalty to the traditions of Anglicanism as of less importance than the preaching of the Catholic faith in such a manner as to bring it home to the hearts and consciences of Englishmen. The former element has in its favour the fact that it works with forms which are already familiar to a certain number of those to whom it appeals; it is content to use the Prayer-book services which are in fact dear to a considerable number of English people who have been brought up in the ordinary traditions of Anglicans. On the other hand the services of the Book of Common Prayer, though capable of a Catholic interpretation, are very ill-suited to be the means for expressing Catholic devotion. As regards the Eucharist the doctrines of the Real Presence and the Sacrifice of the Mass are implied, but not insisted on with the clearness which is needed in order to concentrate on them the devotion of the faithful. A further defect in the Eucharistic office is its lack of variety. In the liturgies of Western

Catholicism it is customary to provide prayers, readings from the Scriptures, and passages to be sung or read from the Psalms, which change from day to day and draw the attention of the faithful to the lessons which the various festivals and seasons of the Church are calculated to teach. The English Reformers reduced the variable elements of the Eucharistic rite to a minimum, and they only made provision for prayers and reading from the Scriptures for the Sundays of the year and a very small number of other festivals. Consequently those who favour adherence to Anglican tradition are handicapped by the fact that the forms of Anglican worship are in themselves ill-adapted for the expression of the Catholic belief as to the Eucharist, and also seriously lacking in interest and variety. (For instance it frequently happens that a Priest who says Mass daily is compelled, if he adheres to the letter of the Prayer-book, to recite the same Collect, Epistle, and Gospel every day of the week !)

Moreover, the Reformers in compiling the Prayer-book deliberately aimed at the exclusion of a large number of the traditional forms of Catholic devotion. Thus the practice of reserving the Blessed Sacrament in order that those of the faithful who could not communicate during Mass might not be cut off from communion, and that Our Lord Himself might be ever present in His temple to receive the homage of His children, was abolished. The rendering of Christian devotion to the Mother of Jesus and to the Saints of the Church and the offering of prayers for the souls of the departed were excluded from the formularies of Anglicans ; they were not indeed condemned so absolutely as the Protestant party in the English Church would have desired, since their apparent condemnation in the Thirty-Nine Articles leaves a loophole of evasion, but they had none the less been almost entirely lost from English devotion.

Thus those who sought to adhere to purely Anglican traditions and yet to restore the Catholic faith and the spirit of Catholic devotion were from the first contending against serious disadvantages, which far outweighed the advantage which they gained from the fact that they preserved the forms of worship already endeared by familiarity to a certain section of Anglican laity. Moreover, with the progress of the nineteenth century that advantage dwindled. For the century witnessed a great revival in religion, but a great decline in the formal and conventional church-going which had been characteristic of the earlier centuries of English religious life; and this decline made itself felt with startling rapidity during the opening years of the twentieth century. In London and the larger English cities it had been obvious for some generations before: by the end of the European war it was becoming noticeable in country districts.

Hence the advantage of adhering to Anglican forms of worship was by the end of the nineteenth century diminishing in value; a generation was arising which knew not the Prayer-book. In dealing with those who had not been brought up in Anglican traditions it was an unquestionable handicap to be tied down to a series of liturgical formularies which were very ill-adapted to express Catholic beliefs and lacked the attractiveness and variety of the devotional methods of the Roman Church. It would indeed be an error to under-estimate the power of a Catholic use of Anglican formularies to produce a very high type of Catholic piety. It produced that piety in a remarkable degree among a very large number of followers of the movement, and it continues to a certain extent to do so. But that piety tends to be of a single type. It possesses in a high degree the merits of steadiness and sobriety in devotion, regularity rather than frequency in the use of the Sacraments, and a great love of Holy

Scripture. But its power to produce this type of devotion does not rest on its use of Anglican formularies, but on the fact that this very exalted type of piety is the natural expression of the religious consciousness of those educated in a certain English tradition and possessing a certain outlook on life which is not specifically English, but is to be found among a very large number of Englishmen. (As proof of this it may be observed that the type of piety described is very similar to that of the English Roman Catholics of the period before the Oxford Movement and the introduction among English Roman Catholics of the more modern forms of Roman devotion.) The reason for the frequency with which this type of religion is to be found among those who are content with a Catholic interpretation of the Book of Common Prayer would appear to be that it is the religion of those who by temperament are generally inclined to a love of forms to which they have been long accustomed. Hence those to whom this type of religion appeals naturally cling to the forms of worship in which they have been educated, although the introduction of the Catholic belief in the Sacraments has invested those forms with an entirely new life and meaning. They are for the most part people of sufficient education to be able to read the spirit of Catholic piety into the rather barren forms of Prayer-book worship.

But this type of piety is not the only expression of Catholic devotion; and its production does not depend on the use of the English Liturgy. It is a type moreover which the general tendency of the age is tending to eliminate. Whether for good or for evil, the whole tendency of modern life is against the production of a type of mind which can express itself in a steady, sober, and regular devotion. The development of social life since the beginning of the century has tended to an increased demand for excitement and variety of interest. Had the Catholic

movement confined its appeal to those who possessed a natural inclination for a quiet, sober, and peaceable religion, it would have cut itself off from all hope of appealing to the bulk of the nation. Thus, in some cases long before the end of the nineteenth century, a new generation arose which began, usually in the poorer districts where Catholicism had been established almost since the days of the Tractarians, to introduce freely the liturgical and devotional system of Continental Catholicism. (It is of interest to note that a precisely similar movement was at work in the Roman communion in England at the time.). Thus the English Liturgy was in fact remodelled by the introduction of various portions of the Roman Mass to eke out those parts of it which the Reformers had retained. This was of course entirely contrary to all ecclesiastical authority ; but in fact authority within the English Church had long connived at far worse abuses, such as the neglect by the vast majority of the clergy of the obligation of reciting the daily office. Moreover, the opposition of the Bishops to the earlier stages of the Ritualist movement had made it clear that Catholicism could only win the day by working a revolution within the Church : the Tractarians had hoped to capture the Church as a whole, but the secession of Newman and the opposition to the Tracts had shown that such a hope could never be fulfilled. The Ritualists had in fact been revolutionaries, who believed that they were justified by the necessity of acting illegally for the salvation of souls : their followers carried out the Ritualist attitude to its logical conclusion. Together with the alteration of the Liturgy, the new generation restored the practice of reserving the Blessed Sacrament for communion of the faithful, and naturally made it the centre of Christian devotion in their Churches. They brought back devotions to the Saints, prayers for the departed, and various other

elements of Catholic devotion in forms borrowed or adapted from modern Roman devotion.

At first the introduction of such practices and devotions was condemned not only by the opponents of Ritualism but by many Ritualists who thought that they could not be regarded as compatible with loyalty to the English Church, and were also afraid that the extremists might arouse and intensify the opposition of public opinion to the movement, and thus affect not only themselves but their more moderate and law-abiding brethren. The division persists to this day within the Catholic movement; there are still those who oppose any deviation from the letter of Anglican formularies. But in the main the past twenty years have witnessed the decisive victory of those who see that the task of converting the English people to the Catholic religion cannot be accomplished without a complete revision of the English Liturgy in a Catholic sense, and the general introduction of the full system of Catholic devotion, as it has been developed by Western Catholicism since the Reformation. In the technical sense the process has not merely been accomplished without authority, but actually in defiance of authority, since the Bishops have for the most part resisted every step in this stage of the revival as they resisted every earlier step in the past. On the other hand in a wider sense they have been acting in obedience to authority; for it has been seen that the function of authority is to formulate what is implied in the religious consciousness of Christians. In practice the Roman system of devotion, as it has developed since the Counter-Reformation, is simply the devotional expression of the truths of the Catholic religion for the benefit of the faithful in a form suited to the needs of the present day; its justifiability is established, so far as its main outlines are concerned, by its proved power to produce Catholic devotion of the

highest type over the widest possible field. Hence those who follow the general outlines of the Roman system are in fact appealing to a system which has the authority of experience. They may have made mistakes in following it too closely in details, but on the whole they were wise in following it as closely as possible, in order to preserve the faithful from being at the mercy of the private fancies of individual priests. To a certain extent, indeed, in all cases the introduction of Roman practice has been modified to preserve some degree of continuity with Anglican practice; but invariably it has been accommodated to a very considerable measure of Roman practice. Thus there has been not only a remodelling of the Liturgy on Roman lines, but also a general introduction of the practice of reserving the Blessed Sacrament both for the purpose of giving communion outside the Mass and for the encouragement of the devotion of the faithful. Services calculated to express and to teach this devotion have been introduced: devotions to the Saints have been taught, and shrines and images have been set up to foster them.

Although this movement has from the first been unauthorised, it has by now established itself firmly in the English Church. The general suppression of it would involve a complete disruption of the unity of the establishment. The only question which is now a serious issue is the exact extent to which the movement will proceed. The main body of Catholic opinion at the present moment undoubtedly favours a certain measure of adherence to Anglican tradition in such matters as the retention of the use of English as the language of liturgical worship, the giving of communion in both kinds and certain minor matters. Which side will finally prevail it would be unsafe to prophecy. In favour of those who would retain a measure of Anglican practice is the fact that it involves less change in the externals of religion, and less disturbance

of the minds of the faithful ; in favour of the more extreme followers of Roman practice is the fact that hitherto every innovation has been opposed on precisely these grounds ; but every innovation has ended by gaining general acceptance. This historical analogy suggests the victory of those now regarded as extremists : but historical analogy is an unsafe guide to the future. The decision on this point is one which may be left to the decision of time, or rather to the guidance of God the Holy Ghost, finding its expression in the growth of Christian opinion. It is to be hoped that the heat whith which the matter is sometimes argued will tend to disappear.

In its broad outlines, however, the movement has won its place in the English Church. Without excluding the more old-fashioned type of Anglican piety alluded to above, it has made room for the development of other types more suited to the needs of an age which is largely dominated by a love of variety and sensation. (It should be noted that this love in itself is neither good nor evil : it is a natural quality, which becomes evil if it gratifies its desire by means of evil forms of pleasure, but becomes good if it gratifies them by the joys of the romance and adventure of the Catholic faith.) Thus English devotion is appropriating more and more the forms of piety by means of which the Catholic reformers of the Continent drove back the advancing tide of Protestantism at the Reformation, particularly the conscious love of Jesus, frequently received in Holy Communion and ever present in the Tabernacle, the joy of the constant fellowship and succour of Mary the Mother of God, and the great army of the Saints of the Holy Catholic Church. It is characteristic of this phase of the movement that it has been from the first a " soldiers' battle." Since the death of Pusey, the dominant figure of the first half-century of the revival, there has been no single leader whom all

Catholics venerated and obeyed. Individual priests and laymen have fought in various spheres for the widening of the outlook and appeal of English Catholicism. Naturally there have been innumerable mistakes—over-rapid advances that could not be maintained, panics in the face of imaginary dangers, wild accusations of rashness and folly, and counter-accusations of treachery and cowardice, failures to go forward when victory was easy, and futile defences of impossible positions. Yet in spite of all the line has gone forward, and continues to go forward with an ever-increasing solidity and cohesion. It is characteristic of this period of the movement that if we ask for the names of its leaders we cannot find them. And the man who stands out most clearly is a parish priest who remained an assistant curate to the end of his days—Arthur Henry Stanton.

Note.—At various periods in the Catholic revival attempts have been made to minimise its indebtedness to modern Roman practice by insisting on the continuity of the English Church as it exists to-day with the Church before the Reformation. Naturally it is an essential part of the case of English Catholics that this continuity exists; if it did not, no revival of the external forms or the devotional practices of Catholicism could make the Church of England part of the Catholic Church; for it would lack the Divine authority given by Our Lord to His disciples and handed down to their successors. On the other hand that continuity cannot be held to imply any necessity that the method of presenting the Catholic religion to the modern world should in any way conform with the methods commonly in vogue in England before the Reformation: such a demand would involve the rejection of the whole work of the Counter-Reformation. In fact the whole basis of the religious life of Modern Catholicism in the West rests on the work of the great Saints of that movement. The use of meditation or mental prayer as a regular part of the religious life of the clergy and the devout laity, the practice of annual retreats for the renewal of the spiritual life, and the holding of missions to preach the Gospel to those who have never been reached by the ordinary methods of parochial work, or have fallen into indifference and unbelief, are mainly due to post-Reformation Catholicism. In the same way the practice frequent Communion, which the English Reformers sought in vain

to establish is a result of the Counter-Reformation. Reformers claimed not without justice that the Church had put the Saints into the place which Our Lord ought to hold in the Christian religion: but whereas they ended by destroying the whole Catholic conception of religion, the theologians of the Western Church succeeded in redressing the balance by their insistence on devotion to Our Lord in the Holy Sacrament as the centre of popular devotion.

Thus in fact the Catholic revival in England was bound to draw its inspiration from the practice of the Roman Church in its present state, rather than from the usages of England before the Reformation, in so far as the essentials of the religious life are concerned. In view of this it is curious that a certain school of English Catholics should have insisted with so much emphasis on the necessity of conforming to the ancient English usages in certain purely external matters of ritual and ceremonial in which that use differs from the modern Roman practice. The difference is in fact very trifling, but it has been exploited in order to avoid the charge of "Romanising" and even exalted into a vital matter of principle by men who in spiritual matters were following purely Roman models. It is to be hoped that in future less heat will be shown by Catholics in arguing whether the modern Roman or the ancient English use is preferable in these points: for the question can only be argued as a matter of taste and expediency in presenting the Catholic religion to the public and in such matters absolute uniformity is neither necessary nor desirable.

Note 2.—It is not of course to be supposed that a position in the later stage of the Movement can be claimed for Father Stanton similar to that of Dr. Pusey in the earlier stages. He is, however, perhaps the greatest of a vast number of men who laboured on similar lines, though this can only be a matter of personal opinion. (In any case I am not considering those still living). It can scarcely be doubted that in the earlier stages of the Catholic revival the verdict of history will consider Pusey as the one figure of really first-class greatness on the Anglican side, and Newman on the Roman. It must be observed that the quality of greatness, as it is considered here, is not a moral quality. There is no reason to suppose that Newman and Pusey were holier than several of their contemporaries. Their greatness rested indeed very largely on their personal holiness; but in itself it is a non-moral quality, which they achieved in the sphere of religion, as Caesar and Napoleon achieved it in the sphere of strategy and politics.

# Part V
# The Reunion of Christendom

# I

## INTERNAL REUNION OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH

There is no problem so urgent at the present moment as the restoration of the outward unity of Christendom. Energy which should be devoted to the conversion of unbelievers is being diverted to controversy between various groups of Christians, while many who might otherwise believe are repelled by the constant quarrels of Christians on matters which appear at least to be of very small importance. In the case of the English Church the position is complicated by the fact that it is by no means an united body. It comprises a definitely Protestant element, a liberal element which practically rejects the elements of Christianity common to Catholics and Protestants alike, and a very large body of opinion which is neither Protestant, Catholic, nor liberal in any strict sense. In recent years a considerable section of this body has tended to crystallize into a party describing itself as "Liberal Evangelical." Its members are mainly of evangelical upbringing, and seek to retain the emphasis of the older evangelicals on the necessity of personal communion between the individual soul and Our Lord, while accepting a wide measure of modern criticism of the Scriptures and caring rather little for the dogmatic system of the older form of Protestantism. They are prepared in many cases to sympathize with Catholicism as a particular way of regarding the Christian religion, and are in fact far more deeply influenced than the majority of them realise by

the Catholic conception of sacramentalism as a vital part of Christianity.

Before considering the attitude of English Catholics towards re-union with other Christian bodies it is necessary to consider their attitude to other elements within the English Church. At the present day there is a considerable tendency to favour what may be described as the comprehensive view of the Church of England. According to this it is desirable that room should be left for the expression within it of various aspects of the truth. Thus Catholicism should be regarded as one way of approaching to God, Evangelicalism as another. It is urged that the human mind cannot apprehend the full truth, and that therefore the Church should leave as much as possible of her teaching undefined, and allow a wide variety of liturgical forms which will enable each of the faithful to express his devotion in the form which is most suited to his temperament and his personal needs. Such a view would concede to Catholics a wide measure of liberty, while allowing an equal measure of liberty to other points of view.

It is quite impossible for Catholics to agree to such a conception of the functions of the Church. They believe that the Catholic religion is the only true interpretation of the revelation of God to man and the sacramental system of the Church the one appointed means by which man has access to the benefits of redemption won by the Precious Blood of Jesus. At the same time they realise that the inherited prejudices and misunderstandings of centuries cannot be swept away in a generation. Moreover, they realise that in the past the traditional system of Catholic doctrine has often been stated in a form which needs new interpretation to adapt it to the modern outlook upon life, and that it has been associated with beliefs that need a considerable measure of re-statement,

Thus although they cannot admit that comprehensiveness is a legitimate ideal, they are content for the present to accept it as a working basis, in the full confidence that the guidance of the Holy Ghost will vindicate the truth of their claims. They have no desire to exclude others from the English Church, but they are confident that in a few generations Catholicism will have permeated these elements which at present reject it. It is to be observed that this does not necessarily mean that the general system of external worship at present usually found among English Catholics will prevail universally. It must be remembered that in the Roman Communion, in spite of a great appearance of external uniformity, there is room for a variety of outlook and devotion almost as wide as that which at present prevails among Anglicans, apart from the more extreme section of Liberals and the small element which still clings to Protestantism as a dogmatic system. It is possible that the English Church will attain to internal unity of faith but retain a very considerable degree of diversity in regard to the external expression of religion. In any case, however, Catholics are confident that the general system of Catholic faith and practice, which has been very inadequately sketched in the earlier parts of this book, will finally prevail in virtue of its inherent truth. For the present they are content that the diversity of belief and practice should continue, provided that nothing is done which would destroy the claim of the English Church to be part of the one Church of Christ. Thus they are bound to oppose any modification of the formularies of the Church of England which would imply a formal denial of any article of the Catholic Creeds, or any administrative action which would treat as indifferent the claim of the Church of England to derive her authority to teach and administer the Sacraments from Our Lord Himself

by transmission through His Apostles. (For this reason Catholics cannot agree to the admission of Nonconformist ministers, who possess no such authority, to administer the Sacraments or to preach as if they were Priests of the Holy Catholic Church). So long, however, as the formularies of the Church of England are not modified in a non-Catholic sense, they are prepared to wait until the time when the truth shall prevail.

## II

## RE-UNION WITH THE HOLY ROMAN CHURCH

In all questions of re-union there is nothing that lies so near to the heart of English Catholics as the hope of re-union with the rest of Western Catholicism. Since the time of Pusey the leaders of the Catholic movement have sought for some means of ending the disastrous breach between England and the chief Bishop of the Christian Church, the successor of the Prince of the Apostles. Unhappily there are many obstacles in the way. It is only possible here to consider these very briefly and to indicate the lines along which it may be hoped that they will eventually be surmounted.

Undoubtedly the chief obstacle to re-union is the predominance of the non-Catholic points of view in the highest quarters of the English Church. It has been this which has led many to leave the English Church in despair of recovering her for the Catholic faith. Yet in all cases the Catholic revival has survived such losses and prospered beyond all hope. In the rapid growth of Catholicism lies the main hope for the restoration of unity with the Holy See.

A second obstacle has been the fact that Roman Catholics in England have inevitably tended to emphasize the importance of those aspects of the Roman system which are most opposed to the traditional outlook of Anglicanism. Thus they tend to emphasize the importance of the Papacy and the extent of Papal authority just because Anglicans have tended to depreciate it. The controversy has been carried on in an atmosphere of exaggeration on both sides, often in an atmosphere of quite unpardonable ill-feeling. There are, however, signs that a friendlier feeling is growing up, in which matters of controversy may be discussed in a saner atmosphere.

From time to time attempts have been made to isolate particular elements of Roman teaching, and to claim that in respect of them the Church of Rome has definitely erred, and that there can be no hope of re-union until she has retracted her errors. The most notable instances of such points of doctrine are the dogmas of Transubstantiation and the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady. But of these the former is an attempt to explain the mystery of the Eucharistic presence of Our Lord, which may in the past have led to superstition, but cannot be said to do so now. It simply attempts to explain what in fact all Catholics believe as to the nature of the change by which bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus. Although it is not accepted by the Eastern Church, it is very difficult to find that the Eastern conception of the Eucharistic presence differs seriously from the Western. Very few English Catholics would be prepared to make it a ground for the perpetuation of the divisions of Christendom. The same may be said of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The belief that the Mother of Jesus was free from sin is common to East and West. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception explains how she obtained that freedom from original sin, which the

Christian obtains at baptism, by holding that she was delivered from it by an act of divine grace at the first instant of her being. It is not likely that English Catholics will ever regard this as a final ground of separation.

Similar attempts have been made to justify separation from the Holy See on the ground of certain points of practice in which the English Church at the Reformation broke away from that of Rome. The most important of these are the Roman practices of using Latin as the official Liturgical language of the Church and the giving of Holy Communion to the faithful in one kind only (under the form of bread), and not administering the chalice to the communicants. On these two points, however, it is to be observed that it cannot be claimed with any show of reason that they are final grounds of division. It would only be possible to justify division on these grounds if it could be shown that they resulted in destroying the devotion of the faithful to the sacrament of the Altar. In particular it must be observed that if communion in one kind is entirely unjustifiable, it would be necessary to hold that it is an abuse of such gravity as to make the communions of the faithful invalid. In other words, if communion under both kinds is necessary, it seems to follow that communicants under the Roman system do not in fact receive communion at all. Thus it would follow that they do not receive the grace of this sacrament, except by a sort of overflowing of divine mercy which allows them to receive that to which they are not entitled by virtue of Our Lord's promise. In view of the abundant devotion of Roman Catholics to the Holy Sacrament and the indisputable effects of sacramental grace among them, this view is obviously ridiculous.

On the other hand it is not open to doubt that at the present time English Catholics would be unable to accept terms of re-union which demanded the surrender of the

use of an English Liturgy and Communion in both kinds ; they are far too intimately bound up with Anglican traditions. This state of affairs may not be permanent ; but in any case it is hardly credible that, if all other differences were solved, the Roman Church would insist on compliance with Roman practice on these two points as a condition of reunion. To make any point of practice a condition of reunion, except where its acceptance or rejection implies the acceptance or rejection of some essential Catholic doctrine, would involve the party demanding conformity on that point in the guilt of perpetuating the division of Christendom. At present Anglicans could not agree to a surrender on these matters, since the vast bulk of Anglican laity would refuse to accept them, and thus render any scheme of reunion ineffective. On the other hand it is quite unjustifiable for Anglicans to emphasize these divergences of practice as a justification for perpetuating the existing division of Christendom.

A further point of practice on which difficulties might arise is the celibacy of the clergy. On this question, as we have seen, the Reformers abandoned the Roman rule with some show of justification. Since then, however, the restoration of the ideals of the priestly life at the Counter-Reformation has led to the universal observance of the rule among the Roman clergy. Scandals are at least as rare among them as among Anglicans. Thus in point of fact the ancient rule, which for a long time was not thoroughly enforced in practice, has now become effective. Among English Catholics the position is difficult. Many Priests have taken advantage of the permission to marry granted by the Church of England ; while there are many more who married after their ordination but before they had fully grasped the Catholic faith. On the other hand there is a growing recognition

that the celibate life is ideally better for the clergy, and there is in particular a growing demand among the laity that the clergy should not marry. It seems certain that the progress of Catholicism in the English Church will sooner or later involve an unmarried priesthood. Hence, although at the moment it would be difficult to reconcile the difference of practice, the point may be left until a general agreement on other matters is attainable.

A particular form of the attempt to justify the division of the English Church from the Holy See on the ground of matters of practice is the attempt to bring forward particular points in the general system of Roman devotion as still retaining an element of superstition. For instance certain somewhat exaggerated devotions to Our Lady or particular Saints are alleged to imply a false conception of their position, and to exalt them to an equality with Our Lord Himself. The drawback to this method of procedure is that it has never been found possible to prove that any such devotions, though tolerated locally, express the authoritative belief of the Roman Church; with its authoritative beliefs most English Catholics have no quarrel. And if it is merely a question of local corruptions the Church of Rome can show no such corruptions as, from a Catholic point of view, are only too common in the Church of England; for example the widespread toleration of the celebration of the Eucharist at a late hour in the evening, or parish Churches where the Holy Mysteries are not celebrated at all on Sundays.

An obstacle which seemed at one time to be very serious may now be regarded as set aside, namely, the condemnation by Pope Leo XIII. of the Orders of the Church of England. For although Anglicans are firmly convinced that they receive at Ordination the power which Our Lord gave to His Apostles to teach and to administer the Sacraments in His Name, yet the recent

Lambeth Conference of 1920 formally declared the willingness of Anglicans to accept, if such acceptance were a condition of re-union, any such confirmation of their Orders as would satisfy the consciences of those with whom re-union was sought. It is not clear whether the decision of Leo XIII. would be regarded as still in force, if there were no other obstacle to re-union on the Roman side ; but if it were insisted on, it seems that the Lambeth Conference would be prepared to recommend, if necessary, the acceptance of ordination by the clergy of the English Church in such a form as to set aside all doubts which Rome might feel. Such an acceptance would not imply an admission of the invalidity of the past ministrations of English Priests, but a willingness to remove all obstacles to unity with another Christian body. The utterances of the Lambeth Conference possess, indeed, no formal authority, but it is safe to assert that in this matter they would be accepted by all English Catholics.

The real difficulties (apart from the inadequate standard of Catholicism of the English Church) arise from the conception of authority generally prevalent in the Roman Church, more particularly among the Roman Catholics of England. It has been noted above that the tendency of Roman Catholics in England is to emphasize the importance of Papal authority. In so doing they are of course merely exalting their own private opinions into the position of formal teaching of the Roman Church. Actually it is doubtful whether Roman theologians would be unanimous in agreeing that any Papal pronouncement had ever been issued with the full weight of infallible authority except the promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady by Pope Pius IX. Under the pressure of immediate controversy some would extend this to the condemnation of

Anglican Orders by Leo XIII. : but it seems a little hard to suppose that this condemnation is a dogma which all Christians are bound to believe as a matter of faith.

On the other hand the attitude of English Catholics suffers from the opposite defect. It has been seen that it is idle to dismiss the growth of the Papacy as a mere accident of history. It is perfectly reasonable for Protestants who reject the whole system of Catholic teaching and worship to denounce the Papacy as the work of Anti-Christ : but it is quite impossible for those who accept the main stream of Catholic development in the West since the Reformation to ignore the part played in that development by the Roman See. Unfortunately at the present moment the majority of English Catholics are content to ignore the necessity of recognising the genuine element of truth contained in the Roman claims and to limit themselves to refuting the arguments of second-rate controversialists or criticising particular details of Roman doctrine or practice. It is certainly hopeless to look for re-union as long as the matter is discussed by means of exaggeration on one side and depreciation on the other. For this reason the question of authority has been dealt with at length in an earlier part of this book, since it seems that without a willingness to re-investigate the whole question on both sides no progress is possible. In present conditions it can hardly be expected that the Holy See will repudiate the loyal though sometimes exaggerated devotion of faithful Catholics of its allegiance, while the majority of English Catholics refuse to admit that there is any justification for Roman devotion to the Holy See as the centre of Catholic unity.

Thus at the present moment it cannot be said that the prospects of a reconciliation are very promising. The Holy See not nunaturally hesitates to consider proposals for reunion put forward by English Catholics, for the simple

reason that they are known to be a minority in the English Church. Until the whole Anglican body is leavened with Catholicism to a far greater extent than is at present the case, it will probably continue to do so. But it must be remembered that the actual standard of Catholic practice which would justify hopes of reconciliation is far less than that which has been attained at the moment in many Anglican Churches. If the Catholic conception of religion outlined in the earlier chapters of this book were generally accepted, there would be considerable grounds for hope, provided that the English Church were ready to admit that the Bishop of Rome has a divine claim to be recognised as the chief Bishop of Christendom, that he is the normal central authority for regulating the extent to which matters affecting Christian faith and morals may be discussed in popular writings and sermons by faithful Christians, and that he is, in exceptional cases, the channel through which the infallible voice of the Holy Ghost speaks to the Church in the sense suggested in an earlier part of this book. (It must be remembered that on any showing such infallible utterances on the part of the Papacy are exceptional.) Such a reconciliation would, however, be impossible, unless the Roman Church consented to the continued existence of the English Church as a body possessing a wide measure of independence as regards its local practice in religious matters, as for example the retention of an English Liturgy, at least for the present, and a considerable freedom in matters of devotion. Incidentally it would involve the existence in England of two separate bodies, one representing the Church of England as it exists at the present, the other the present Roman Catholic body. It would involve the right of the English Church to appoint its own Archbishops and Bishops, (not of course the retention of the indefensible system of nomination

by Prime Ministers). This independence in matters of liturgical practice, devotion, and local self-government is essential to any hope of re-union in the near future. It is, indeed, possible that some English Catholics would in such a reconciliation prefer to transfer their allegiance to the Roman body. On the other side it should be observed that in negotiations with a view to such a reconciliation, the English Church would have no right to demand that any explanation which it might be able to accept as to the exact scope and nature of Papal authority was the only true one, and that it must be accepted as the only one which Catholics might lawfully hold; it could at most ask that it should be recognised as one which loyal Catholics might hold without being suspected of heresy. The vague wording of the official Roman pronouncements is intended to allow a wide variety of interpretations: and Anglicans have no right to demand that for their benefit one particular interpretation should be recognised as the only true one.

It is, indeed, possible that re-union between English Catholics and the Holy See might come in another way. It is always conceivable that a Protestant episcopate might take some action, as for instance the establishment of general inter-communion with the Nonconformist bodies, which would forfeit the Catholic character of the English Church. In such a case English Catholics would almost inevitably be compelled to seek reconciliation with the Holy See: it is hard to suppose that they could exist permanently as an independent body. In such a case corporate re-union of English Catholics with the Holy See would be inevitable, or almost inevitable.

Note.—It may perhaps be objected that those who go so far in the acceptance of Roman teaching and practice as those who share the views put forward in the foregoing pages, would be more honest if they "went over to Rome." The objection shows a curious inability

to understand the Catholic religion. English Catholics believe that they are already within the Catholic Church. The Church is at the moment externally divided through the faults of both sides; and that part of it which is known as the "Church of England" has largely forgotten its Catholicism. Since however God has set them in it, they can only suppose that it is their duty to remain where they are and to labour for the salvation of souls by recovering for the English Church her due proportion of Catholic doctrine and devotion, and by seeking to restore the external unity of Christendom. So long as they believe this, they cannot leave the English Church without being deliberately guilty of schism. The mere fact that they happen to prefer certain Roman forms of devotion is no more a valid reason for leaving the English Church than would be the fact that they happen to prefer the climate of Italy to the climate of England.

## III

## THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH

The past twenty years have for various reasons witnessed a growing friendship between the Holy Orthodox Church of the East, which separated from communion with the Holy See in the year 1054, and the Church of England. Formally, indeed, the bodies are divided by the fact that the English Church in the Nicene Creed professes its belief that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, whereas it was the insertion of the words "and the Son" into that Creed which was the nominal cause of the schism between the East and the West, and the Eastern Church has never accepted them. In practice, however, this old controversy has ceased to have any serious meaning. In external forms of religion the two bodies are widely different, for the Liturgies of the Eastern Church are still of that ancient type which had disappeared in the West long before the Schism. This, however, is not a reason for division; for the difference

of rite was never a cause of separation between the East and the West.

At the present moment a number of the bodies which form the constituent parts of the Eastern Church extend a qualified recognition to the Orders and Sacraments of the English Church, and tolerate in certain circumstances the admission of Anglicans to communion at the altars of Eastern Churches. It seems probable that with the development of the Catholicism of the English Church the way will be found to a complete restoration of communion between the two bodies. English Catholics can only welcome the prospect of complete re-union with a part of Christendom which has been found worthy to furnish recruits in recent years to the noble army of martyrs. None the less it is to be hoped that they will avoid the temptation to use re-union with the East as an excuse for ignoring the paramount necessity of labouring for re-union with the See of Peter, or as a means for depreciating the position and authority of the Holy Roman Church. There has in the past been a dangerous tendency to exploit the ancient quarrel between Rome and the East in this way. Such an exploitation of the divisions of Christendom is a manifest violation of all laws of Christian charity.

## IV

## THE NONCONFORMIST BODIES

From what has been written it will be clear that English Catholics can at present see little prospect of restoring unity between the English Church and the various bodies which at the Reformation or at later times have broken away from the English Church. There are two reasons

for which this re-union is difficult. The first is that these bodies separated themselves on account of their objections to these elements of Catholic teaching and practice which the English Reformers retained; they demanded a thorough Reformation. The second is that they did not retain the order of the episcopate, having indeed no bishops who were prepared to support them. Consequently their ministers are not validly ordained; they have no authority to preach the Gospel in the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Sacraments which they administer are no Sacraments at all. This does not mean that English Catholics deny that both the preaching and the Sacraments of these bodies have been means of grace for bringing many souls to Jesus Christ. But they have done so in virtue of a special grace vouchsafed to the members of these bodies, who were not responsible for their separation from the unity of the one Church; often indeed the original separation was due to faults on both sides. But they cannot be accepted as possessing the qualifications necessary for unity with the Catholic Church unless their ministers are ready, without necessarily repudiating their past actions, to submit to such a form of ordination as will place beyond doubt the validity of their future ministrations, and make it plain to all men that they possess the full authority which Our Lord conveyed to His disciples for the welfare of His Church. It may be added that in so far as they profess doctrines which are contrary to the received faith of the Church it would be necessary that they should be abandoned; but it is doubtful how far the doctrines which were the original cause of separation are now of any large importance in the religious life of these bodies.

It must, indeed, be noted that some of these societies claim that their ministry is valid on the ground that at their first separation the form of Catholic orders was

transmitted through Priests ordained to the Catholic ministry ; and there is a certain amount of evidence that at different periods in the history of Christendom orders now recognised as valid were transmitted through priests and not through Bishops. To this it must be replied that the evidence for this point is at the best highly doubtful ; that the universal authority of Catholic Christendom has for centuries held the opposite view ; and that it does not rest within the competence of the English Church to abandon the universal practice and belief of the Church ; for the Church of England, being only a part, cannot speak in the name of the whole Church. The recognition of such orders would only be possible for an organ of authority which could definitely speak in the name of the whole of the Catholic Church. The Church of England has no authority of its own in the matter.

It can only be hoped that in the cause of Christian unity these bodies will show themselves ready to make the sacrifice of pride which, as has been seen, the English Church is prepared to make. At the same time it is hardly to be expected that they will do so until they are more permeated with the Catholic spirit than is at present the case. There has indeed been in recent years a growing tendency towards a Catholic conception of the Sacraments among certain elements of English Nonconformity ; but there has also been a tendency to advance in other quarters towards an extreme liberalism, which destroys the fundamental teachings of the Christian faith. English Catholics can only pray that the Catholic element may conquer, and that the time will come when these bodies will return to unity with the Catholic Church.

# Part VI

## Prospects and Problems

# I

## LIBERALISM

One of the main problems which at the moment confronts Catholic theology is a reconciliation of the Liberal movement in Christian thought with the traditional teaching of the Church. During the greater part of the nineteenth century Catholics, whether English or Roman, were mainly concerned with a desperate defence of the old literal interpretation of Scripture. Pusey himself failed to see the impossibility of maintaining the older point of view ; in this point alone has the modern development of English Catholicism broken away from the lines he laid down. It must be remembered that his attitude was to a large extent justified by the extravagances and inconsistencies of the early critics ; but in this respect the position has been radically altered. The colossal learning of Lightfoot finally discredited the more advanced theories of the earlier critics, and it is now possible to combine the findings of a reasonable criticism with the orthodox belief as to the nature of the Christian revelation. At the same time there is need of a clearer adjustment of the claims of liberty and authority than has at present been achieved. The Roman Church endeavours to meet the difficulty by pronouncements which appear to commit it to a position of complete conservatism in the matter of Scriptural criticism, but in fact are so worded as to leave to scholars numerous loopholes of escape. It cannot be said that this is a very satisfactory position, since it either conveys a false impression of obscurantism on the minds of the learned, or else it leaves the simple exposed to the shock of finding

that the Church does not in fact impose on her children those views which they would naturally suppose to be implied in her official pronouncements. In general the expression of unorthodox views is prevented by a rather strict centralised discipline; but hitherto no formal attempt has been made to reconcile the claims of liberty in matters of belief with the claims of the eternal verities of the Catholic faith.

It is necessary to bear in mind that the claim to liberty of investigation in matters of religion is not confined to the text of the Scriptures, but extends to the whole range of Catholic doctrine. From the Catholic point of view there can be no possibility of accepting the view that matters on which the Christian faith has been defined by the authority of the Church can now be called in question: but it must be remembered that as a matter of fact the doctrines which have been so defined are few in number and that the definitions so laid down have as a rule been intended rather to exclude particular systems of teaching seen to be false than to define in precise and absolute terms what all Christians are bound to believe. Hence even in regard to doctrines which have been formally defined there is a wide scope for perfectly legitimate "re-statements" of the Catholic faith, intended to express the truths which the Church has always held in the terminology of modern thought. Further, there is a wide range of traditional doctrine, which has been generally accepted in the past, but need not necessarily be regarded as part of the essence of the Christian faith, never having been formally proclaimed as such by ecclesiastical authority. It is perfectly legitimate for Christians to see in this field an opening for free enquiry. In this sphere, however, as in the subject of the criticism of the Scriptures, the Roman Church in general tends to a conservative attitude, though it should be added that there are in

both fields eminent Roman theologians who are exceptions to the general rule.

Now if the attitude prevalent at the present time among Roman theologians be regarded as purely temporary and provisional, it is perfectly possible to regard it as a wise one: for it is only reasonable for the Church to content herself with discouraging speculation in general at a time when the faith is being assailed by critics, who are ready to welcome any new theory, provided that it is sufficiently extravagant. As a purely temporary measure, therefore, it is not unreasonable to wait until an atmosphere has developed in which a clear basis can be discovered for the adjustment of new and old beliefs. Certainly the Roman attitude is as justifiable as the official position of the Church of England, which is unable to interfere effectively with the enunciation of views which scarcely profess to be in any way compatible with the Christian faith. None the less in this field of religious thought English Catholics are at the moment in a peculiarly favourable position, if they only realised it. The eternal truths of the Catholic faith are embodied in the Creeds of the Church; what falls outside them is a legitimate field for theological inquiry and restatement. It is for this reason regrettable that many of them should cling tenaciously to the old belief in the literal accuracy of every word of Scripture, and the traditional interpretation of every point of Catholic doctrine, including even doctrines which have never formally been proclaimed to be part of the Catholic faith, while on the other hand another section, in a wild desire to be "liberal," is ready to accept as finally established every passing utterance of the most recent school of liberal criticism so long as it professes some kind of allegiance to the Catholic conception of religion.

In this field of re-interpreting Catholic doctrine in the

light of modern thought, and the re-investigation of the meaning and contents of the Scriptures, there lies a vast field of research for English Catholics, provided that they can avoid the two extremes which have been indicated above, neither condemning as heretics those who favour the re-interpretation or amendment of traditional beliefs nor deriding as obscurantists those who as yet see no necessity for any abandonment of the ancient ways. With a due exercise of tolerance and mutual forbearance English Catholics could do much to assist Catholic thought as a whole in arriving at a due adjustment of the rival claims of freedom and authority: it is to be regretted that hitherto they have failed to make better use of their opportunities. In part, indeed, this is due to the fact that they have been compelled to waste much energy in matters of immediate controversy, and to the fact that many Catholic scholars have been involved in active pastoral work which left no time for serious scholarship; in particular it should be remembered that there has been in the past and still survives a tendency to exclude Catholics from posts which would have provided them with the opportunities for this kind of work. For the most part, however, their failure has been due to their own fear of admitting the possibility of any need for investigation in these fields, in view of the obvious extravagances into which a certain school of Liberal Anglicans has fallen as a result of such investigations. Such a fear is manifestly unworthy of Christians who believe in the guidance of the Holy Ghost; and English Catholics, possessing in this sphere a liberty which is for the time being wider than that of their Roman brethren, should make use of it with full confidence that they will be preserved from the danger of serious error.

The limits of such investigations are clearly defined by the historical revelation of God to man given in the

person of Our Lord, and the interpretation of that revelation laid down in the Catholic creeds and the Catholic system of religion. Outside these limits there is a wide sphere for free enquiry: and such enquiry is urgently needed, since many are deterred from accepting the Catholic faith by the quite erroneous supposition that it involves the acceptance of various doctrines which have never been more than the generally received opinions of Catholic theologians. It may be hoped that in future an increasing number of English Catholics will devote their energy to research in these fields rather than to the barren discussion of the controversies of the moment.

## II

## SOCIAL PROBLEMS

It has already been seen that the early victories of the movement were won through the devotion of the early Ritualists in ministering to the needs of the poor and outcast. Here as elsewhere Pusey was the leader. He built out of his private wealth a Church to serve the needs of one of the poorer quarters of the city of Leeds; an outbreak of cholera in London brought him to the succour of the parish clergy of Bethnal Green. The position is the same to-day; for the most part the Churches which stand for the modern development of the Catholic movement are to be found in the poorest districts of the larger English towns; it is to be hoped that this state of affairs will continue.

None the less there is a certain difference in the attitude of Catholics in these matters. Fifty years ago most priests who taught the Catholic religion in such regions were occupied very largely in working for the social

betterment of those to whom they ministered, even in some cases allowing their labours in this field to interfere with their primary duty of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They supported numerous organisations for improving the material lot of the poor; and often they were vigorous partisans of some political scheme which promised a remedy for the evils around them.

To some extent this state of affairs is changing. Catholics tend to concentrate more on the purely religious side of their mission, and are disposed to use the various organisations of an ordinary parish as a means for gaining a hearing for the doctrines of the Catholic faith rather than as a means for improving the temporal position of their neighbours. They are less inclined to commit themselves to any political programme, except as a matter of personal opinion, which may be advocated in private but not taught from the pulpit. There are several reasons for this change. In the first place the actual conditions of life have altered. Fifty years ago the state of the poorer parts of England was so monstrous that no one familiar with them could abstain from demanding immediate reforms for patent abuses, unless he were entirely without the spirit of Christianity. To-day conditions, though still intolerably evil, have been improved. The result is that the remedy is no longer so obvious. The evils that remain demand not immediate local reforms but comprehensive legislation to strike at their roots. It is only rarely that the position of the parish priest enables him to take any effective action in the direction of social reform. We may take as an example the most pressing evil, that of unemployment. Any parish priest in a poor district is acutely conscious of it; but where experts with wide opportunities of investigation differ as to the precise means for remedying the evil, it is difficult for the parish priest to do more than alleviate it in so far

as it affects individual members of his flock. He may hold strong personal opinions of his own as to the proper remedy, but he cannot claim that they have the authority of divine revelation which would entitle him to teach them as matters of faith. He may for instance be an ardent Socialist ; but while he may fairly claim that the Socialist ideals of liberty, brotherhood and justice are part of the divine revelation, he cannot claim that the Socialist dogma that this and other evils can only be remedied by the national ownership of land and the means of production is in the same position. He may believe it to be true : but he can hardly proclaim it as part of the teaching of Our Lord. Hence the latest phase of the Movement, while no less sympathetic towards the sufferings of the poor, is less occupied with schemes for their temporal relief, and more concerned with the salvation of their souls.

A second factor which has contributed to this change is the growth of the Labour Movement. Fifty years ago Trade Unionism was only just emerging from the days of legal oppression, and was grateful for the sympathy of Christians whose support enabled it to gain a friendly hearing from the general public. To-day the position of the Trade Union Movement is assured, and its leaders quite rightly prefer to rely for success on their own efforts and the support of the rank and file of their followers, not on outside sympathy. At the same time the small local unions have been replaced by federations covering the whole area of the country ; the result is once again that the ordinary Christian lacks the means for judging as to the rights and wrongs of either side in an intricate economic dispute. Hence the days when individual Christians could intervene effectively as arbitrators in an economic dispute are over ; such disputes must either be fought to a finish by national amalgamations

representing the employers and workers or settled by the arbitration of those whose training and special knowledge enable them to speak with the authority of experts. It is occasionally possible for a Christian of high position to intervene with effect, but as a rule this will only occur in such industries as are still in a low state of organisation. Such openings will tend to disappear if the industrial organisation of England continues to develop on its present lines.

Thus it seems probable that in future the Catholic movement will concern itself mainly with preaching the Gospel to the poor, and will be less concerned with their immediate material welfare, which can be promoted more effectively by the methods of Trade Unionism or by governmental action on a large scale. Organisations for the material benefit of the poor will diminish ; Catholic energies will be mainly concerned either with attracting to the teaching of the faith those who might otherwise drift away from it, or never hear it preached, or else with providing relief for the immediate necessities of Christians who have fallen on evil days. On the other hand the teaching of the faith must, if it is properly carried out, produce a greater willingness to listen to all sides of a case instead of judging it on the basis of immediate personal selfishness. If this could be done, it would have a revolutionary effect on the life of the nation, in view of the tendency of modern democracies to be swayed by appeals to immediate financial interests. It is to be profoundly regretted that many Catholics fail to realise that their faith carries with it the duty to judge of public matters on higher grounds than those by which the majority of voters are normally swayed, and to discriminate, so far as possible, between the truth and the falsehood of the arguments laid before the nation by political leaders. It will indeed be many years before any noticeable effect

can be produced in this direction by the Catholic movement ; but it is to be hoped that its teachers will realise the duty of inculcating an attitude of practical Christianity in judging social problems as against the tendency to be content with economic selfishness. Without this the Catholic revival will fail, whatever its apparent success, for it will not be preaching the whole Gospel.

Thus for the present it is rather in its effect on the attitude of the individual to the whole social and political outlook of the present time than in any public action on a dramatic scale that the Catholic revival is likely to affect the industrial and social evils of modern civilisation. At the same time Catholics must always remember that those evils are monstrous and intolerable, and that to acquiesce in them is to be false to the teaching of Our Lord. For while He pronounces His blessing on the poor, and while poverty is for the Christian a noble privilege, a privilege whose greatness is measured by the fact that Jesus Himself chose poverty rather than riches in His earthly life, it is only a privilege for those who choose it of their own free will, or, finding themselves poor by no free choice of their own, none the less are able to welcome poverty as a means of following Jesus. There is no excuse for a system which condemns a large proportion of the nation to the atrocious conditions in which the poorest classes of English society are compelled to live at present. Any Christian who fails to recognise that English civilisation is utterly contrary in many respects to the divine intention, and is the effect of avarice, the root of all evils, convicts himself of an utter failure to understand the elementary principles of the Gospel. There may be considerable doubt as to the exact remedy : but no true follower of Jesus will ever allow himself to be deceived into supposing that there is no evil to be remedied, or into accepting

the comfortable excuses which are too often put forward to prove that no remedy is possible. In particular the Catholic who enjoys any considerable measure of wealth will always remember that he has been entrusted with a terrible responsibility. For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. He will always feel distrustful lest the riches he enjoys should be the means of his losing his own soul—and they may do so by blinding him to public evils no less than by blinding him to his own personal vocation. It must be admitted that Catholics have in certain cases recently been over-willing to ignore the implications of the Gospel as to the duties of the Christian in regard to his public life: it is urgently necessary that this should be remedied, though it will not necessarily result in their binding themselves to any particular political party.

Note.—Ideally of course a Christian should be ready to help all who are in distress, without respect to their beliefs. In practice the evils of the present organisation of society cause such widespread suffering that in most poor districts the resources of the parochial organisations are inadequate for the relief of the necessities of Christians. Hence it is rarely possible for Catholics to do much for the relief of the temporal necessities of those who are not Christians, for the simple reason that they are unable to give adequate assistance even to those who are of the household of the faith. Naturally whenever it is possible for them to assist others as well, they will welcome every opportunity of doing so. It may be added that indirectly much is done by the followers of the Catholic revival in this direction by the assistance which they render to such institutions as hospitals, etc.

## III

## CATHOLICISM AND PEACE

During the earlier period of the Middle Ages the Papacy made a very genuine attempt to secure for itself the position of a supreme arbiter in the affairs of Europe, which would enable it to solve the disputes of nations without an appeal to arms. It failed to do so, and became merely the tool of one or other of the contending factions in the diplomacy of Europe. Since the Reformation it has rarely been possible for any Christian organization to intervene effectually in such matters: for international quarrels have in most cases been complicated, if not accentuated, by religious divisions. In any case it is necessary to begin by recognising that the position of the Church is a difficult one. All Christians must in theory condemn the appeal to arms as a means of gaining a victory in an unrighteous quarrel: it is not so easy to condemn the appeal to arms for the defence of a righteous cause. Ideally no doubt it is better to suffer wrongfully than to resist: but in practice the vast majority of Christians are unable to live up to such a counsel of perfection. Thus the Church has generally recognised that the duty of offering no resistance to unjust oppression is limited to those who also accept the evangelical ideal of absolute poverty: there is no justification in the Gospels for the attitude of those who regard all participation in war as sinful, but see nothing wrong in the acquisition of private wealth. On the other hand, if it is admitted for a moment that Christians may take part in a righteous war, it becomes difficult for the Christian to refuse to take part in any

war, or for a Christian organisation to condemn any war: since in any quarrel it is certain that both belligerents will find convincing reasons for demonstrating the justice of their cause. Thus during the European war, the Christian institutions of Europe were in the same position as organised labour, which as an international institution is opposed to war: the Christians of the various European countries, no less than the majority of the Socialists, firmly believed that the cause of their country was right: and from the available information it would have been difficult for them to do otherwise. The attempt of the Papacy to adopt a genuinely neutral position only brought it into suspicion: both groups of belligerents suspected it of sympathising with the enemy.

When, however, all these difficulties have been admitted, it remains unhappily true that the Christianity of Europe failed to act up to its profession during the recent war. Many who in private life were thoroughly devout Christians were prepared to come forward in support of blatantly unjust schemes of national aggrandisement: this reproach applies equally to Catholics and Protestants of all countries. It is hard to blame any for supporting the national cause of their country at the outbreak of the war: it is difficult to excuse those who failed to protest against its continuance.

Unhappily it is difficult to find any solid grounds for hoping that there will be any obvious improvement in the near future. The visible re-union of Christendom might do much to lessen the danger of war by creating an international organisation for protesting against any manifestly unjust appeal to arms: but it could not entirely avert the danger. For in the first place the nations of the world are not predominantly Christian, and it might easily happen that national governments would refuse to listen to the voice of a Christian tribunal. In

the second place international relations are even more complicated than the social and economic problems of one particular nation, and in quarrels it is frequently impossible to say that one side is entirely in the right and the other side entirely in the wrong: in any case only an absolutely detached critic will be able to do so. And such a critic is scarcely likely to convince the partisans of either side. Now the decision of a purely Christian tribunal can only be enforced by moral suasion and the infliction of spiritual penalties: for example the Papacy used the penalty of excommunication, by which whole nations were cut off from the Sacraments of the Church, in order to enforce its decisions in the Middle Ages. In many cases, however, this penalty was ignored: the local clergy continued to administer the Sacraments in spite of the Papal prohibition. In modern conditions it is obvious that the infliction of such a penalty would affect only the Christians of any particular nation: and it is quite probable that they would refuse to submit to such a penalty if they were convinced of the justice of their cause. Thus it might theoretically happen that the attempt to preserve peace would only result in the division of Christendom: as a matter of fact it is more probable that the central organ of a re-united Christendom would refuse to run the risk of creating such a division and would be unable to express any effective opinion in an international quarrel.

Thus it seems that even a complete reunion of Christendom could do little more than to create a general spirit of opposition to the use of war as a means of solving international disputes. A more obvious method of securing the desired end is the suggestion that Christians should support with all their ability the formation of a strong and united League of Nations to prevent the appeal to arms by any one nation in particular. There is indeed

much to be said in favour of strengthening the powers of the League of Nations at present existing with this object. At the same time it is necessary to bear in mind the difficulties connected with the whole scheme of such a league. For instance a League of Nations cannot enforce its decisions on a nation which refuses to accept them except by appealing to arms ; but if it does this, it becomes simply an alliance of certain nations against certain others. It may indeed be in the right as against the nation which refuses to accept its ruling : but it is very difficult to suppose that the recalcitrant nation will agree, or that the matter will be so clear that the subjects of such a nation as a whole will be convinced of the injustice of their cause. (Even if the League confines itself to economic weapons, such as a general blockade of the recalcitrant nation, it is still in effect appealing to force, although the force employed be of a modified kind.) If it has no means of enforcing its decisions on those who refuse to accept them, there is the danger that its decisions may become merely a pious expression of opinion, which no one will respect, except those who seem likely to profit by them.

Thus although Christians are bound to welcome the ideal of a League of Nations, it seems premature to hope that it will provide a certain means for the permanent ending of war. The only possibility of such an end of all war would seem to lie in the hope of a general re-union of Christendom and a general growth of Christian opinion among the nations of the world, coupled with a League of Nations which, in virtue of its general support by all men of good will, whether professedly Christian or not, commands a degree of respect in the eyes of all nations which will make any nation reluctant to reject its decisions. In such a position there would still be no theoretical guarantee of the impossibility of war : but it is at

least probable that it would be found adequate in practice.

In the meantime it may be hoped that Christians will come to see more clearly than they have generally done in the past the duty of refusing to furnish an uncritical and unqualified support to the nationalist ambitions of secular politicians, and will insist on the necessity of applying the principles of their religion to international affairs. It must be admitted with shame that in the past hundred years they have signally failed to do anything of the kind, and that Catholics have for the most part been the worst offenders in the matter. In the case of the Roman communion there have on occasions been excuses for the failure, since in several parts of Europe allegiance to the Roman Church has been identified with loyalty to some particular national cause. Hence it has been difficult for the ecclesiastical authorities not to encourage the ambitions of their faithful, especially where those ambitions have been directed to the liberation of Catholics from oppression by "heretics," as in the case of Ireland and Poland. In theory it is hard to justify this attitude, but none the less it must be recognised that in practice it would have been difficult to avoid it. English Catholics could do much at the present moment to foster a better conception of the duty of the Church in these matters: for they possess the ideal of the Church as a body which claims a higher kind of allegiance than mere national loyalty, but are at the same time free from the political entanglements in which the Roman Church is still involved in certain parts of Europe as a result of the Schism between the East and the West and the Reformation. It is to be hoped that they will rise to the opportunity: hitherto, with a few notable exceptions, they have been content either to swallow the ordinary programme of national patriotism or to give a quite

uncritical support to the ideal of a League of Nations without any realisation of the difficulties it involves.

## IV

## MISSIONS TO THE HEATHEN

The Catholic Revival has sometimes been reproached with a comparative indifference to the duty of preaching the Gospel to the heathen. Whether this be true or not, it has certainly done less than the Evangelical Movement in this direction. Catholics have indeed done much; but they have done less than others. The reasons for this are various. In the first place the Revival has been very largely occupied with missionary work at home in districts quite as heathen as the darkest wilds of Africa. In the second place it has normally been relegated to parishes whose inhabitants are poor; the majority of Catholic parishes have to be supported to some extent from outside. Wealthy Catholics have always been distinguished by an amazing generosity; and it is the large demand made by parishes in England where the faith is taught to the poor that has made them unable to do more for the heathen abroad. In the third place it must be remembered that the whole Catholic ideal of dignity in worship and the use of the glories of artistic beauty for the promotion of the honour of God demands a larger expenditure of money than the Protestant tradition of worship. In the same way the Catholic ideal of the Priesthood demands a larger staff for the needs of the ordinary parish than the evangelical conception of the ministry. Finally, it may be noted that hitherto the Catholic Movement has had far fewer really wealthy followers than other elements in the Church of England.

None the less it remains true that Catholic missionary effort needs a far greater support than it receives at present. At the moment, indeed, owing to the effect of the European war both on the value of money and on the supply of men for the priesthood, several missions are in a serious position ; there is, however, no reason to suppose that this is more than a temporary difficulty. A far more serious duty is the permanent enlargement of the contribution made by English Catholics to the evangelisation of the heathen. There are however ample signs that the need is fully realised ; and there is no reason to doubt that means will be found not merely for the maintenance but for the extension of a work without which English Catholicism will fail in one of the primary duties of Christianity.

NOTE.—The brevity with which this subject is treated here must not be taken to indicate any lack of appreciation of the importance of the matter, but rather the reverse. It is possible to treat it briefly, because there is no theoretical problem to be discussed. The duty of preaching the Gospel is a perfectly plain one : the practical difficulties of finding men and money fall outside the scope of this book. It is however doubtful whether the authorities of the English Catholic missions would not be well-advised to investigate the possibility of greater co-operation among themselves in appealing for support. At present there are a large number of independent missions, all in urgent need of help, which are continually appealing to the general public. The result tends to be that the average layman is overwhelmed by the multiplicity of demands made upon him ; he sees quite clearly the impossibility of meeting them all, and is liable to end by responding to none. The suggestion that it is not an urgent duty to preach the Gospel to the heathen can of course only be made by those who reject the whole conception of Catholic Christianity put forward in this book.

## EPILOGUE

The growth of English Catholicism during the past ninety years has been essentially that of a revolutionary movement. It shows the familiar features of all such movements—the division between those who wish for a moderate degree of reform and those who will be content with nothing less than a radical change of the whole system. An outsider, witnessing the disputes of these two sections and of the intermediate sections of opinion, might suppose that the whole movement was hopelessly divided, and that it could never win any degree of success. The impression would be profoundly misleading. It has already been observed that the divisions within the movement go back to the earliest days of the Tractarian revival: and in spite of these divisions the Revival has already affected the whole life of the English Church. Although the divisions may continue, there is no reason to suppose that they will be a bar to future progress.

In one point indeed these divisions are complicated by external causes. Throughout the whole of English society there has been a reaction against the general tone of dignified sobriety which was the ideal of the English middle classes during the Victorian era. The present generation finds its ideal rather in a frank outspokenness, which often distresses its elders. The merit of the older outlook on life and religion is seen at its best in the splendid solemnity of such men as Pusey: it could easily degenerate into an artificial pomposity. The merit of the younger outlook is its natural spontaneity and freedom from artificial restraint: it may easily degenerate into

a rather vulgar flippancy. The effect of this purely social change has affected religion no less than other departments of life. To the older generation religion was something apart, to be spoken of only in an atmosphere of exalted seriousness : to the younger it is an integral part of life, to be discussed as one of its normal factors and in the same style as the rest. It is idle to argue which of these modes of thought is the better. The merit of the one is its recognition of the paramount importance of religion : the merit of the other is its frankness in proclaiming its faith to the world at large. The difference of outlook is indeed as old as the first days of the revival of Catholicism at Oxford : John Keble was shocked at what he felt to be the flippancy of Richard Hurrell Froude. It has, however, been intensified by the recent tendencies of social development to such an extent as to cause grave differences among the followers of the Catholic movement. There is a tendency for the older leaders to deplore the frivolity of the younger generation, and for the younger to chafe at the pomposity of the older. The difficulty, however does not end here. For the older outlook is one which naturally clings to the older tradition of Anglicanism and finds no hindrance to its devotion in the reticence and lack of variety of the English Liturgy. The younger generation tends to find them intolerably dull in themselves, and quite unsuitable for appealing to the needs of a generation which can tolerate anything but dulness. Further, for an older generation the mere discovery of the Catholic heritage of the English Church and the sacramental system of religion was a glorious adventure : it seemed almost a sacrilege to suppose that anything else could be needed. The present generation of Catholics, however, includes many who have never been anything else : and the proportion of those who know no other form of religion is necessarily bound to increase. Such

people necessarily see the deficiencies of the Anglican forms of worship more clearly than their elders, who in the glory of discovering the Catholic religion had no time to ask whether the Anglican presentation of it was perfect in every detail.

In this way there arose what threatened at one time to be a dangerous divergence within the ranks of English Catholics. The quite serious question as to the extent to which it was desirable to adhere to or depart from Anglican liturgical forms was complicated by the fact that the older generation, which as a whole, though with many exceptions, favoured a conservative policy, and the younger generation which favoured innovation, were further divided by the general divergence of their outlook on life. The result was a general bitterness of tone, which seemed likely to endanger the progress of Catholicism. It would indeed be premature to say that the danger is entirely at an end. None the less there is a good deal of evidence that the bitterness with which the controversy was conducted during the second decade of the twentieth century is diminishing. It is quite clear that the course of events has finally decided in favour of those who advocate a very considerable alteration of the external forms of Anglican worship and the introduction of a very wide measure of Roman practice in matters of devotion, with the result that the only difference of opinion at present outstanding is the exact extent to which the process of modification should go. There are signs that Catholics are beginning to realise the wisdom of leaving this matter to be decided by the course of events, and the futility of the attempt to lay down in advance the limits beyond which the process cannot be carried.

With the removal of this danger the prospects of the Catholic Revival will be materially improved. At the same time it will never develop its full strength until it

can overcome a certain narrowness and provincialism of outlook which has hitherto tended to lessen its efficiency. The defect is due to the position of English Catholics in regard to the rest of the English Church on the one hand and the Roman communion on the other. In view of that position they have had to justify both their claim to continuity with the Church of England and also their claim to be Catholics. The necessity of doing so has led to several deficiencies in their general presentation of the Catholic religion. Thus on the one hand they have tended to assume among those to whom they make their appeal a general acceptance of certain fundamental Christian doctrines professed by the Church of England and to concentrate in a rather one-sided manner on the proclamation of those particular points of sacramental teaching on which they are divided from the rest of the English Church. Hence they have often failed to insist on the inherent unity of the Catholic system of religion and the necessity with which the sacramental system follows from a right belief in the revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ. Similarly through fear of being regarded as " Romanisers " they have endeavoured to lay down different standards of teaching and practice beyond which it is impossible to go without disloyalty to the Church of England. The effect of this has been to produce the impression that they are more interested in defining the exact limits of what they may or may not do than in the primary task of the Catholic Church, which is to preach the Gospel for the salvation of souls. It has even been suggested that certain forms of devotion, which might be of the highest value for the purpose, must not be used on account of their incompatibility with loyalty to the Anglican system. On the other hand Roman criticisms of the lack of authority in the Church of England have led them into the mistake of attempting

to elaborate various theories, which will justify them either in obeying Papal authority, as if it were, at the present moment and in the present circumstances, entirely binding on all Anglicans, or in rendering obedience to some supposed theory of authority which will possess all the immediate efficacy of the Roman system without its living embodiment in the person of the Holy Father. Here the effect has been to produce an excessive concentration of attention on the nature and functions of authority and an apparent neglect of the truths which it is the duty of authority to preserve and to promulgate.

The tendency to concentrate on matters of immediate controversy is natural ; but it has been a very serious cause of weakness. It is probable that far greater progress would have been made if Catholics had been more content to preach the whole Gospel, and to recognise quite frankly that the Church of England, in its present position, can never provide a permanent home for the teaching of the Catholic religion. Either it will, as all Catholics hope and pray, be permeated with Catholicism to such an extent that it will be ready for reunion with the rest of Catholic Christendom, or it will in the last resort reject the Catholic element, which it at present still manages to comprehend, and decline into the position of a purely Protestant society, holding only those elements of Christian doctrine which survive the disintegrating influence of the extreme forms of Liberalism. Naturally Catholics are bound to make use of the ordinary weapons of controversy in order to secure that the present period of transition shall end in the former rather than in the latter manner : their weakness has lain in their readiness to treat the controversial issues of the present period of transition as if they were the eternal truths of the Catholic faith. (A similar weakness is very manifest in the normal methods with which the case of the Roman Church is

presented in this country.) The effect of this weakness is best seen in the fact that its chief successes have been won either among those who have been brought up in an orthodox and moderately sacramental Anglicanism, and who in fact only need guiding into a fuller desire for the sacramental system of Catholicism and a clearer conception of the Catholic Church, or to those who live in the utter heathenism of the poorer districts of the large towns of England, to whom it has been compelled to preach the Gospel from the very beginning. It has had very little success in appealing to that vague ethical admiration for the person of Jesus, which passes for religion among wide circles of English people, especially of the middle classes : and the explanation would seem to be that it has concerned itself too much with preaching the Sacraments and the authority of the Church to those who have not the remotest conception of the Incarnation and the Atonement. In the same way it has often failed to retain those whom it has brought to the Catholic religion. They have been taught to identify English Catholicism either with an untenable theory of authority or with some arbitrary limitation of the external forms of Christian devotion. In the end they have seen that the theory was untenable or the limitation arbitrary, and left the Anglican communion, which they quite mistakenly regarded as committed to these particular points of detail.

The hope of English Catholicism then lies in transcending these minor details of present controversy and devoting itself to the full preaching of the Catholic religion. If it will learn to concentrate its energies on the salvation of souls, without caring whether its methods are loyal to Anglican traditions, or whether it is able to produce an exact system of ecclesiastical authority, there is no limit to its hopes of working for the glory of God and the salvation of mankind, apart from the limit of the time

when by the power of the Holy Ghost the Catholic Church is restored to its external unity. It is by preaching the religion of Jesus Christ in all its fulness that English Catholics can do most to hasten both the conversion of England and the re-union of Christendom.

THE END